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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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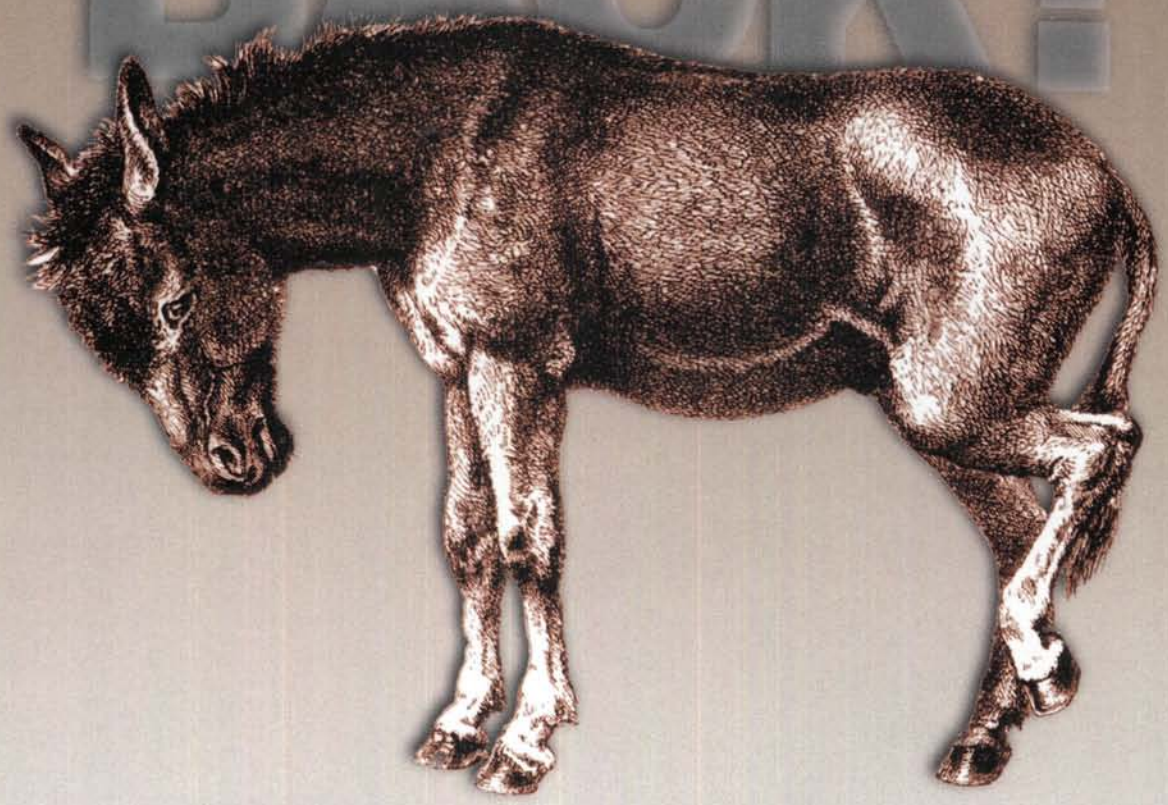

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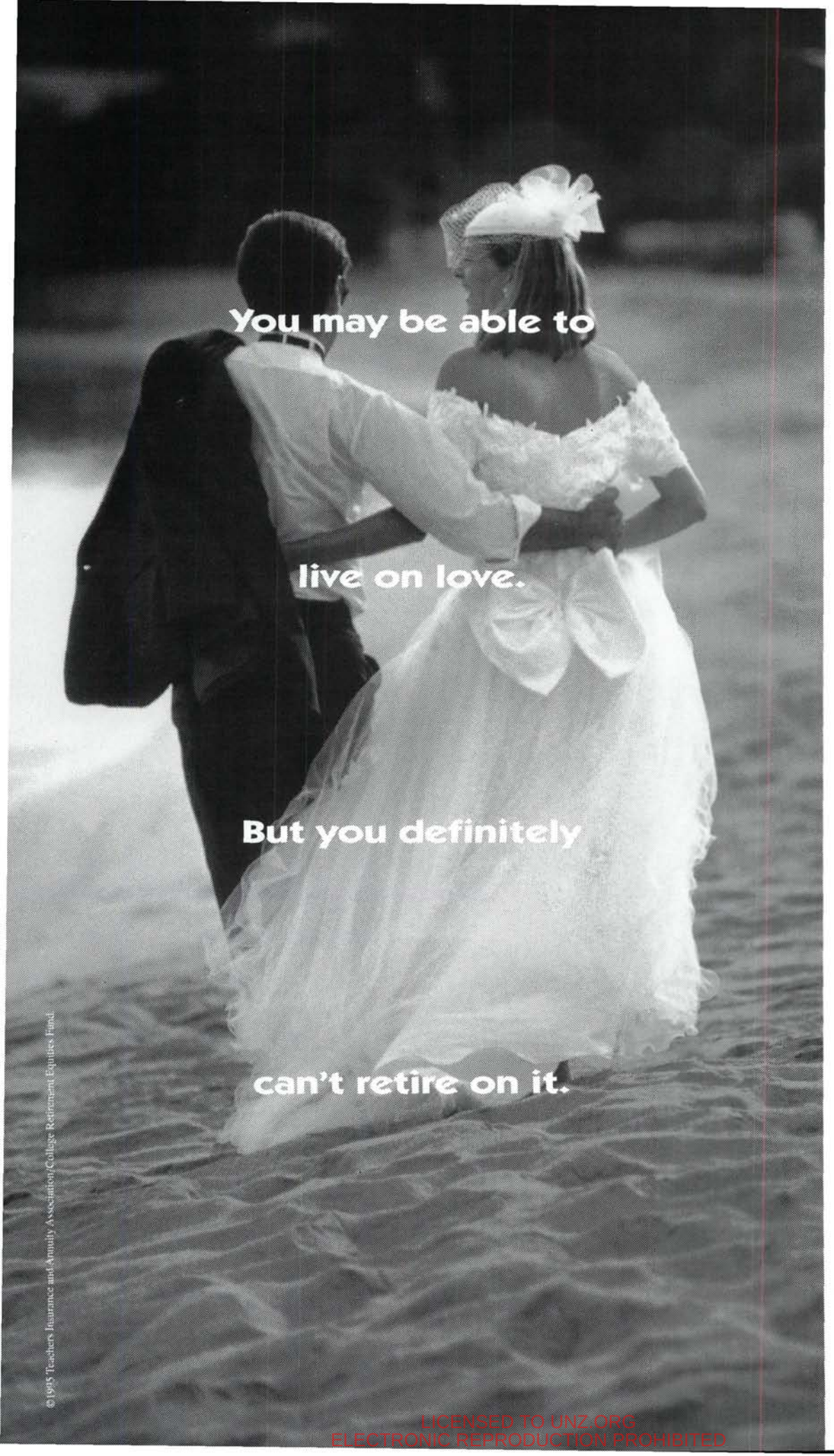

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

APRIL 1, 1996

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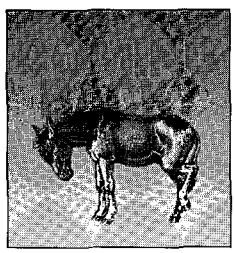

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CORRESPONDENCE

Camille unmasked

To the editors:
Shame on THE NEW REPUBLIC for providing yet another forum for the desperately wacky Camille Paglia ("Ice Queen, Drag Queen," March 4). The entire article (from unfounded theories on male intrusion and contamination to finding significance in a long-ago coconut smashed by the first family) is too ludicrous to merit rebuttal.

However, I am writing to vociferously protest the characterization of Dorothy Rodham as a "hypercritical and puritanical mother." Nothing could be further from the truth. This is a woman who has spent a lifetime lavishing nothing but love, praise and encouragement on all of her children. It would be difficult to imagine a more loving and more devoted parent. (Where does Paglia think the First Lady got her extraordinary parenting skills?)

As for "puritanical," I have known few people possessed of a more generous, winning personality and glorious wicked sense of humor than Dorothy Rodham.

That small segment of the public who even know who Paglia is have come to expect her overwrought, over-thought psychobabble, but to allow her to make up the facts on which it is based is unforgivable.

LINDA BLOODWORTH-THOMASON
Santa Barbara, California

To the editors:
Camille Paglia is the most entertaining fantasist now commenting on the cultural scene. Her "mythic method" reminds me of Ezra Pound's. Sometimes that method made Pound brilliantly insightful in a lucky kind of way, but it was also the reason he could rave about Mussolini's literary insight after a brief interview in which the Duce referred to *The Cantos* (a work he surely had not read) with the safe adjective *divertente.* Interpreting public figures archetypally according to a few "luminous details" usually culled from a great distance gives the commentator-interpreter the latitude to be wonderfully provocative. And that's the value and the fun of reading Paglia. But to work from such a distance also affords Paglia the convenient opportunity to mold her figures according to her own grand scheme. It's a little like reading Yeats's "A Vision," in which all the possibilities of human character are charted according to the phases of the moon. So, when we read Paglia, we have to keep in mind that we're encountering not so much her subjects (Madonna, Lady Di, Hillary Clinton, etc.) as we are encountering Paglia's own systematizing imagination. And that's the genius of Vint Lawrence's drawing of Hillary Rodham Clinton in zippered leather, which accompanied Paglia's article. It bore a striking resemblance not to Rodham Clinton but to Paglia herself. There's an alternative way of writing about others, famous or not, and its watchword is "accuracy." That's what Robert Lowell had in mind when he wrote: "We are poor passing facts, / warned by that to give / each figure in the photograph / his living name."

ROBERT SCHULT
Decorah, Iowa

To the editors:
Camille Paglia rules. Next time, get her recipe for pop-porn.

JOHN W. HELLERSTEDT
Austin, Texas

To the editors:
What qualifies Camille Paglia to write a "psychological portrait of Hillary"? It is culture, not psychology, that rigidly assigns an analytic mind to masculinity and the public display of emotion to femininity, aggressive ambition to masculinity and high fashion to femininity. Paglia's pseudo-psychodynamic posturing is offensive, the more so because it is mistakenly attributed to psychology, a field that already gets far less respect than it deserves.

An intelligent woman, Paglia might be expected to empathize with the difficulties faced by Hillary and other highly educated women in our society. Instead, as always, she seeks attention through a kind of sleazy mental exhibitionism rather than through thoughtful analysis. If I were tempted to do the kind of invasive, inappropriate theorizing she indulges in, I might suggest she suffers from a strong need to pull more successful women down to her own level using the ammunition always brought against women who pursue nontraditional paths: "she may have done whatever ... but she isn't a real woman."

Any professional woman with half a brain eventually hears the vicious term "snow queen" and hates it. How can Paglia knowingly engage in the cruelty of using such a term against a woman who, whatever her faults, embodies the aspirations of our gender?

NANCY ALVARADO
Newton, Massachusetts

To the editors:
Having recently read Camille Paglia's piece on Hillary Clinton, we feel an overwhelming obligation to denote the following. This is a point: .

Paglia's writing appeared to be in dire need of such a device, and we can only hope that she takes advantage of our generosity in the future.

JILL CAUGHERTY
DAN CAUGHERTY
Cary, North Carolina

To the editors:
After Camille Paglia's "Ice Queen, Drag Queen," journalism has a new genre: road-kill.

ROMAN BORGERDING
Nathrop, Colorado

To the editors:
I gave TNR access to my home and my mind because I trusted its voices to educate me on important political and intellectual issues in a fair-minded and intellectually honest manner.

Now I am betrayed. Camille Paglia's article on Hillary Clinton is not the kind of writing I allow into my home. Insidiously disguised as a psychoanalytical study, it takes such cheap, supermarket tabloid-level shots that it shamed me to read them. I am not canceling my subscription because I also remember many articles in TNR that have enriched me. We all make mistakes, but for the sake of your and the publication's honor, please don't do this again, to anyone, for any reason.

BRITTMARIE JANSON PÉREZ
Thrall, Texas

To the editors:
The ripe-to-rottenness nature of Camille Paglia's style is so lushly exotic, so enticingly tropical, that one has to wonder what she would write if she ever tried it knowing diddledy-squat about what she is talking about.

MARY ELLEN MILLER
Bowling Green, Kentucky

To the editors:
Pity poor Hillary. Imagine the indignity of being dubbed an ice queen and drag queen by pop scribbling's reigning drama queen. The latest installment of Camille Paglia's unending review of the butch/femme continuum in human behavior argues that Hillary Rodham Clinton represents "professional women's sometimes-confused search for identity." But what are we to make of a lesbian who maintains that the effort to end anti-gay bias in the military reflected the First Couple's "discomfort with masculine men"? (Or for that matter, a lesbian who in other venues attacks gay activists for "destroying" orange-juice queen Anita Bryant?) Anyone who has happened upon Paglia speed-shrieking through a late-night TV interview with Roger Ailes or Tom

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Snyder will be amused by her portrait of Rodham Clinton as a "stonily sealed, skull-like coconut, harsh, ungiving, withholding the milk of human kindness." At points, Paglia's argument is merely goofy, as with its decades-old tale of a cruisy encounter with Senator Ed Brooke. Elsewhere, Paglia turns gratuitously vicious. In just one instance of many, she likens the moist, pleading (and, in a parenthetical slur, suicidal) eyes of Hugh Rodham to those of Vincent Foster. Is there no statute of limitations in Washington on the vulgar use of this man's death?

PAUL G. SCHINDLER
Brooklyn, New York

To the editors:

I readily admit I have never read anything written by Camille Paglia, nor have I even heard of her. I suppose, therefore, you may call me a Philistine ... but never have I read such ridiculous drivel in all my life. Paglia should be confined to the care of a team of psychiatrists for the rest of her life. She is in need of a great deal of help.

MICHAEL NEWMAN
West Covina, California

To the editors:

Camille Paglia's "Ice Queen, Drag Queen" is a perfect example of an article that is unfit for a reputable national magazine, no matter who the subject might be. Plug in any name you like, from Newt Gingrich, or even Jesse Helms, to Socks the cat, and the result would be the same: Paglia's article is an irresponsible and immature polemic, an extended cheap shot whose targets include a child (Chelsea Clinton) and several dead people (including Vincent Foster and Hillary's father, Hugh Rodham) who cannot speak for themselves in a letter to the editor. At best, Paglia shows atrocious manners: no one should sling unfounded insults masked as pop psychology, or play God with other people's psyches, especially not in public. At worst, the author is unspeakably vicious, a tone unbecoming to a responsible journalist. Why did Paglia write such an article? Certainly not to tell the "truth" about Hillary Clinton. The only reason we can detect is that she vehemently dislikes the First Lady and wanted to expose her psychological inconsistencies, as if inconsistency itself is a shameful thing in a public figure. In the process, the author has shown vastly more of her own dark side than that of Hillary Clinton.

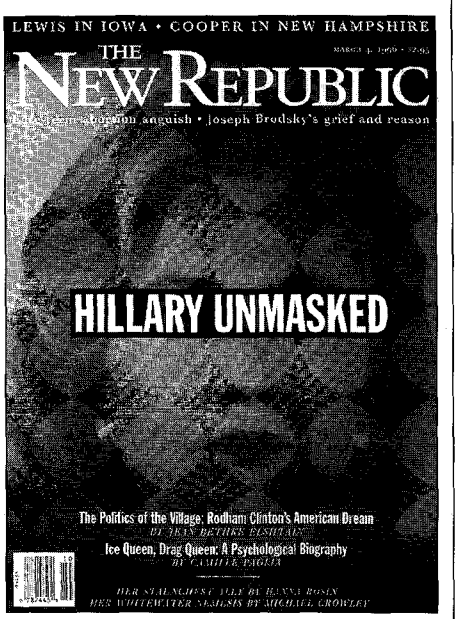
The most puzzling question, however, is not why Camille Paglia wrote about Ms. Clinton, but why TNR published her article. Both the author and the editor are accountable to readers. We request an apology from them both—ideally, to the First Lady, although we cannot speak for her, but definitely to any readers who, like us, are angry at being subjected to such a purposeless display of spleen-venting.

CHERYL F. JUNK
DARYL R. JUNK
Durham, North Carolina

To the editors:

Regarding "Ice Queen, Drag Queen:" tell Camille Paglia that sometimes a tampon is *just* a tampon.

TERRY KESSEL
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania


LEWIS IN IOWA • COOPER IN NEW HAMPSHIRE
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Joseph Brodsky's grief and reason
HILLARY UNMASKED
The Politics of the Village: Rodham Clinton's American Dream
Ice Queen, Drag Queen: A Psychological Biography

White noise

To the editors:

Surely Robert Brustein is not trying to argue that political expression has no place in art ("More Noise Than Funk," March 4). Yet he seems offended and even bewildered by the racial bitterness and sarcasm that he finds in George C. Wolfe's *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk.*

Why? He writes that he would prefer to see some recognition that things have improved for some black people. He even seems to be asking for some gratitude on behalf of blacks for affirmative action and for "the efforts being made by white society to atone for past injustices."

In doing so Brustein plays into one of the white stereotypes that he derides in his review. He is looking for black Americans to forgive and forget 400 years of American history. He wants black performers to dance as if slavery never existed, as if racial segregation did not persist and as if things were equal now for blacks and whites, as if the races really did have equal opportunity.

But history and pain are bound to be expressed through art, if not through politics. Brustein should not be surprised that black America is still not satisfied. Until the social and economic remnants of racism are gone or fading Brustein can't ask for black Americans or black artists to act like everything is OK.

MICHAEL MANN
Washington, D.C.

Fat chance

To the editors:

Michael Lind accusing Jack Kemp of quackery ("Kemp Fire," March 11) is akin to Bill Clinton accusing Richard Simmons of satyriasis. The fact is that federal revenues grew (on average) at nearly twice the rate of inflation between the years 1981 and 1989, despite a deep recession in 1982 as a result of Paul Volcker's assault on inflation. And what Lind pejoratively calls "Star Wars" has developed to the point that a sea-based system protecting the United States from rogue missiles is technologically deployable within four years, while theater defenses are supported even by the weak-kneed Clinton administration.

Meanwhile, Lind keeps pressing to fix "tragic conflicts of interest between subcultures [and] classes"—i.e. an intellectualized class warfare; presumably he fights imaginary battles with evil Southern Bourbons even in his sleep. Truly, Lind is becoming the Kilroy of class grievances.

QUIN HILLYER
Washington, D.C.

No! No!

To the editors:

Don't you dare take Michael Lewis off the Morry Taylor story. No! No! Your magazine is the only place I've been able to find information on this campaign.

Do yourself a favor; do history a favor; do your readers a favor: keep Michael on the trail. (He's probably having a lot of fun, so you don't need to give him a raise.) This is a truly important story. Gutsy guy takes on the establishment. Gutsy guy loses. The quintessential American political story. I promise that, if you leave Michael on the story, next year when you send my subscription renewal request I'll pay up immediately instead of waiting until you've sent the sixth notice. Pleeeeeeeeease.

DEBORAH MILLER
Richmond, Virginia

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TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

Huddled excesses

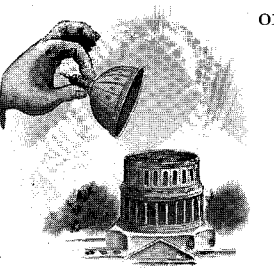
Sooner or later America must face reality. It is going to be painful.... [W]hat America is fighting is a piece of poetry.... The poetry is thrilling. It is on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...." The trouble is that huddled masses need jobs.

Patrick Buchanan? No, Richard Strout, the eminent liberal journalist who wrote this column for several decades. Since Strout wrote those words in 1980, more than 10 million people have immigrated to the United States legally. The number of new immigrants, and their higher-than-average birthrate, recently forced the Census Bureau to revise its 1989 estimate of U.S. population in 2080 upward, by an additional *100 million*—to 400 million.

But it is not numbers alone that should convert liberal immigration defenders. As Strout observed, the "huddled masses need jobs." According to a 1995 Bureau of Labor Statistics study, competition with immigrants has accounted for roughly half the recent decline in wages among unskilled American workers. According to University of Michigan demographer William Frey, competition for jobs with poorly paid Latin American and Asian immigrants is driving low-income whites and blacks out of high-immigration states like California and high-immigration cities like New York. No wonder Steve Forbes and Dick Armey favor high levels of immigration, and *The Wall Street Journal* has proposed a five-word amendment to the U.S. Constitution—"There shall be open borders." It's great for business.

But not so great for poor Americans. And they're not the only ones under threat. U.S. companies can legally hire 140,000 *skilled* foreign workers each year. Business lobbyists have claimed that the U.S. computer industry needs a never-ending supply of East Asian and Indian scientists because there are not enough Americans able to do the work. Really? Why can't American industry train native and naturalized citizens for high-tech jobs? Some companies do the reverse. In 1994, the American International Group Insurance Company fired more than 250 American computer programmers and replaced them with Indian workers brought in under the H-1B visa program (which allows firms to pay only the foreign prevailing wage plus a living allowance). To add insult to injury, the laid-off workers, on pain of losing their severance pay, were forced to train their foreign replacements for sixty days.

The greatest gains in income by the American middle and working classes, both white and black, took place during the era of immigration restriction, from the 1920s to the 1960s. Not coincidentally, this was also the heyday of union membership, which is inevitably hampered when mass immigration produces a workforce divided by ethnicity. And, of course, it was the golden age of public support for universal entitlements and anti-poverty efforts. Coincidence? Not likely. The most generous and egalitarian countries in modern times have been culturally homogeneous nation-states admitting few or no poor immigrants, like those of northern Europe and Japan (where corporate paternalism substitutes for social democracy). The equation of social justice and national solidarity seems much less compelling in the modern U.S., where immigrants overall are much more likely than native-born Americans to receive welfare benefits. (In Chinese-speaking Asia, one widely distributed book tells potential immigrants how to obtain SSI and other benefits of the American welfare state.)



There is, then, a liberal case for immigration restriction that has nothing to do with the absurd and offensive claims of some conservatives that growing numbers of nonwhites threaten our civilization (Patrick Buchanan) or our gene pool (Charles Murray). What's more, the obsession with illegal immigration on the part of politicians like Pete Wilson evades the main issue. Each year, 300,000 to 400,000 illegal immigrants arrive in the U.S. to stay, a fraction of the roughly 1 million legal immigrants who take up permanent residence each year. We can and should crack down on illegal immigration—with a stronger border patrol, fences and a computerized national employment verification system—but legal immigration represents the greater threat to American wages and unions.

Reducing legal immigration is a perfectly legitimate liberal cause—if "liberal" means protecting the interests of ordinary wage-earning Americans. Unfortunately, for thirty years the Democratic Party has not acted like a liberal or social-democratic party. It has acted as a coalition of ethnic patronage machines (each seeking to enlarge the numbers of its group eligible for affirmative action) and affluent white social liberals (whose lifestyles in many cases depend on a supporting cast of low-wage Latin American maids and nannies). Unlike free-market conservatives, who can at least invoke a principled libertarian viewpoint, pro-immigration liberals have no theory, merely the "piece of poetry" of which Strout wrote—and the N-word (nativist). But now that majorities of black Americans and even a slight majority of Hispanics, according to a Roper poll commissioned by Negative Population Growth Institute, support reducing immigration to less than 300,000 a year, it will no longer do to accuse all supporters of immigration reform of racism and xenophobia.

As Strout concluded in a critique of immigration policy back in 1981, "people must face facts, whether they like them or not." A brave minority of liberal Democrats, including Wisconsin Congressman David Obey, have done so, signing on as cosponsors of the immigration reform bills introduced by Alan Simpson in the Senate and Lamar Smith in the House. Though the bills wisely cut back on extended-family reunification—a Ponzi scheme that has resulted in escalating immigrant numbers—they would reduce legal immigration by only a third, to about 700,000 a year.

That's still much too high. The numerical cap envisioned by the original Kennedy-Johnson reform in 1965—290,000 a year—would do more to bring U.S. population growth in line with other developed countries and to raise U.S. wages, particularly at the bottom of the income scale. Yet there would still be room for plenty of humanitarian refugees, spouses and children of Mexican-American citizens, Taiwanese grad students and English journalists. Though the U.S. would no longer take half the world's legal immigrants, we would still have the world's most generous immigration policy.

TRB was right. Genuine liberals should unite with populist conservatives to reform an immigration policy that benefits few Americans other than exploitative employers. It is easy to talk in poetry. But it is necessary to govern in prose.

MICHAEL LIND

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

APRIL 1, 1996

IS DOLE TOO OLD?

As the Clinton-Dole contest takes shape, a bizarre convention has emerged: Bob Dole's age is not a legitimate issue. Too bad Bob Dole has violated this convention himself. It's not just that Dole bulldog Al D'Amato ran ads in 1980 suggesting that 76-year-old New York Senator Jacob Javits was too old for the job, or that Dole himself, during a brief foray into that year's presidential primary, pointedly sent 69th-birthday wishes to Ronald Reagan. Bob Dole has made his age a centerpiece of his campaign this year—as a reason to vote for him.

"Mature, decisive leadership," "the comeback adult," "one more mission for my generation." The intended meaning of these slogans is clear: Bob Dole epitomizes the courage and character of a generation forged in war. Bill Clinton and his fellow draft-dodging, philandering boomers? Well, they're just not "tested and trusted" in the same way. As Dole supporter Warren Rudman told *The Washington Post* last summer, "I pick up a lot of respect and nostalgia for Dole and what his generation represents."

Fair enough. But, if it's OK to use the age issue to vote *for* Dole, why isn't it legitimate to use it to vote against him? Surely Bob Dole's clumsy, lethargic campaign performance has something to do with his 72 years. Would anyone deny that Dole has looked worse on the stump this year than his current primary opponents and he himself in earlier races? Dole's advisers have noticed. Their strategy now is to avoid debates, to limit his public appearances and to rely heavily on local surrogates. As a Dole adviser told *Time* last July, "He's 71 years old. It's something we're sensitive to. We're not going to overschedule him." What about when he's president?

In a backhanded acknowledgment of the age issue, Dole has flirted with serving only one term in office. Such a decision would profoundly affect a Dole presidency: enhancing the power of his vice president and reducing his influence over both Congress and his own party. If Dole makes such a decision, to induce Colin Powell to join the ticket, for instance, it's vital that he do so publicly, something he now appears reluctant to do. The press must push Dole to make his intentions clear, and it cannot do so while pretending his age is irrelevant to his candidacy.

There's another more pressing reason why this should be an issue in the campaign: once Dole enters the White House, the debate will no longer be possible. We still don't know, for example, if Ronald Reagan was exhibiting the first signs of Alzheimer's during his second term. Experience shows that, once in office, powerful forces shield a leader from public scrutiny. François Mitterrand's doctor now claims the late French president concealed metastasizing prostate cancer all through his tenure and that the disease incapacitated him during his final six months in office. Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou was on life support for two months this winter before agreeing to step down; throughout, his party refused to admit anything was wrong. The Twenty-fifth Amendment to the Constitution says that when the vice president and a majority of the Cabinet declare a sitting president "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office" he can be replaced. But this still leaves that authority in the hands of those who, like their French and Greek counterparts, might have a vested interest in keeping health problems a secret.

Bob Dole, to his credit, has publicly released his medical records. And, for 72, he's a healthy man. But, if elected, he would be America's oldest president, three and a half years older than Ronald Reagan was when he first took office. According to actuaries from the life-insurance branch of the United Services Automobile Association, a major San Antonio-based insurance company, the average 72-year-old white man suffers a 27 percent risk of dying within five years (about the time between now and the end of Dole's first term). Although Dole exercises and eats a healthy diet, his chances are probably not much lower because his history of high cholesterol (a genetic condition) and years of smoking (he quit in 1982) increase his chances for coronary artery disease. For the average 49-year-old white male (Clinton's age) the risk is 4 percent. That's 23 percent worth thinking about. •

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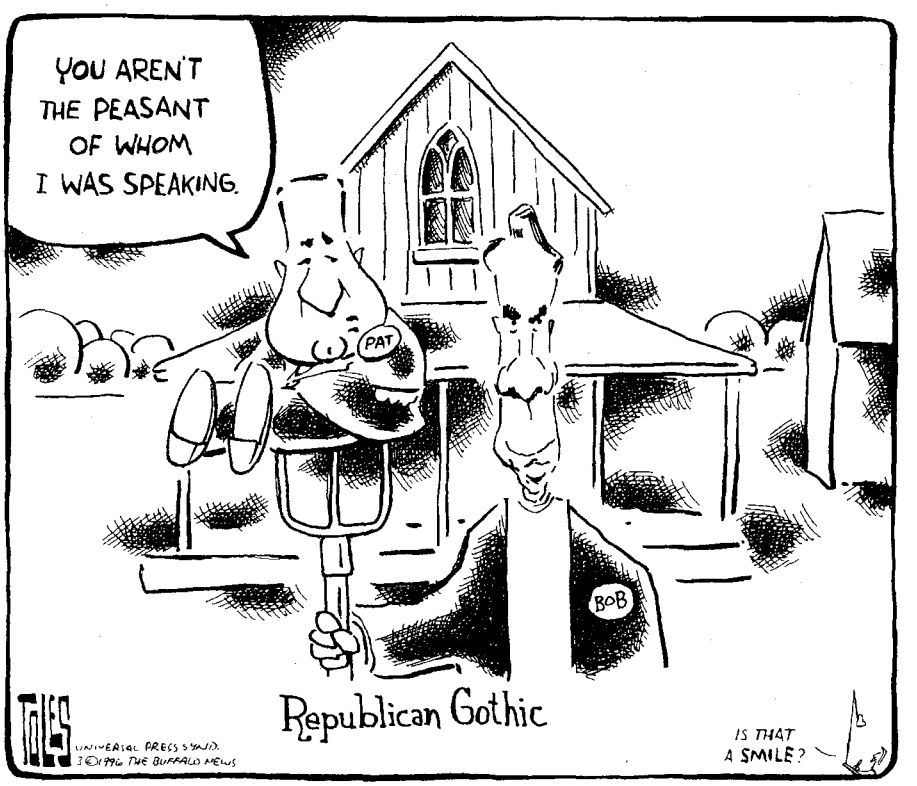
NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: A 121-year-old who is thought to be the world's oldest woman released a rap album titled *Mistress of Time*, saying the proceeds would go toward a minibus for her retirement home.... To improve the scenery for a vice presidential photo shoot in Denver, the city's water department swelled a river by releasing 96 million gallons of water at a cost of $59,000.... A Boston woman sought a restraining order to keep a 3-year-old boy away from her 3-year-old daughter in the sandbox.... Donald Ellingford of Idaho Falls, Idaho, was arrested on an outstanding charge while visiting his jailed wife.... A Nashua, New Hampshire, woman's Irish setter saved her from a life-threatening emergency by pushing a speed-dial button programmed to 911.... Anticipating a glut in the salmon market, the Alaska state senate proposed making the fish a staple on prison menus.



ALL IN THE FAMILY: Last month the House Ethics Committee dredged up another tax-exempt organization used by Newt Gingrich to spread his empowerment message, a group nobly named the Abraham Lincoln Opportunity Foundation, or ALOF. Now it's one thing to funnel money through a wonk tank like the Progress and Freedom Foundation and pretend it's non-partisan. But ALOF is a charity, set up in Colorado to help inner-city children, according to *Roll Call*. At least it was, until GOPAC took it over. Instead of midnight basketball, the group spent most of its money in the early 1990s on two conservative TV shows: "The American Opportunities Workshop" and "American Citizens TV." Programs include Alan Keyes on national "Taxpayer Action Day" and Newt Gingrich on educational choice. More reason for the V-chip.

THE *TIMES*, DOWNSIZED: Pat Buchanan is a powerful man. Not only does he have Bob Dole in his thrall, Ross Perot watching his every move and Bill Clinton in slow-motion ecstasy, he gets to determine the editorial policy of *The New York Times*. There was much to commend in the paper's recent, epic, give-us-a-Pulitzer series on "downsizing," but its breathlessness, high anxiety and length can only contribute to an irrational approach to the American economy. Yes, job losses are occurring in large numbers in the service sector; and people who are dislocated from their jobs deserve media coverage and sympathy. But, as that brave Pollyanna Robert Samuelson has pointed out, the shakeout is no more traumatic than the industrial belt recession of the early 1980s. Labor Department statistics show that 53 percent of recently rehired workers go on to higher-wage jobs, compared to 47 percent who suffer a decline in their wages; and unemployment is far lower than it has been in the last two decades. Well, we guess that the paper that pioneered "diversity" news has found more victims to celebrate: its nervous, affluent and white readers.

SHARM SCHOOL: Political leaders from nearly thirty countries, large and small, gathered on March 13 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, the snorkeling capital of the Middle East, to do something. But it was not clear exactly what. Actually, many came just to be there, savoring, like the blitzed Boris Yeltsin, a last moment in the international spotlight (and defending his war against the Chechens) or pretending, like the prime minister of Italy, that their governments were still players in the great game. In convening this conference, President Clinton's intentions were very different. He wanted to assure Israel that it was not alone in its struggle against terrorism, and, if this demonstration helped the re-election chances of Shimon Peres, so much the better. Very decent intentions, indeed. But, while Clinton thought that he was speaking to a conference on terrorism, the Arab attendees had slightly different agendas. Almost all of them, including Hosni Mubarak, conceived of it as a conference on the peace

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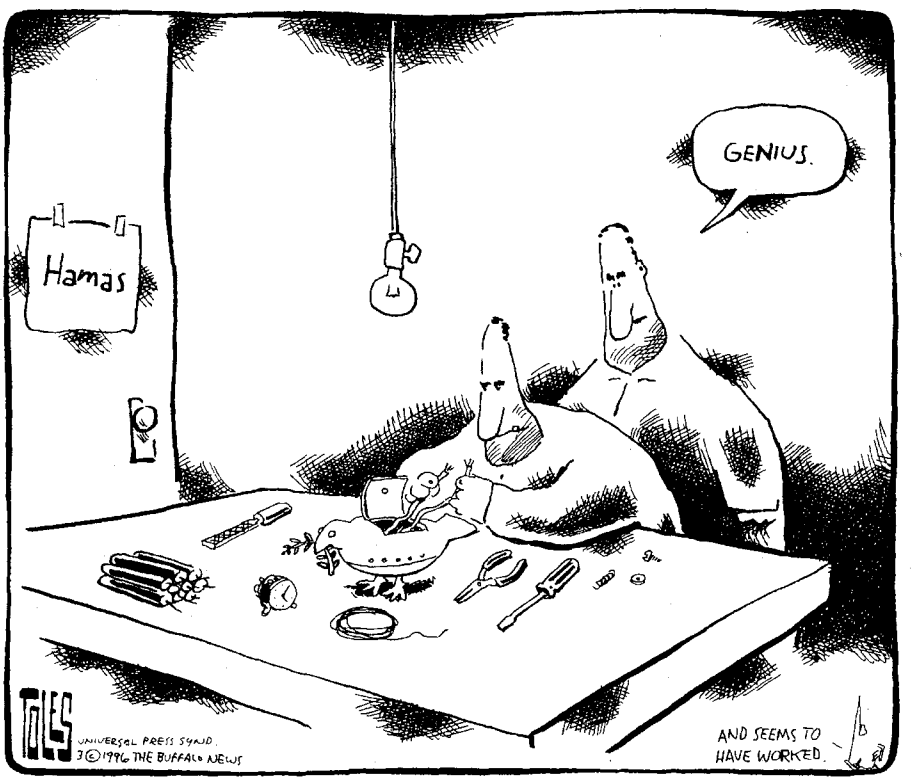
process, implying that the problems of the peace process subsume the problem of terrorism. Despite this disagreement with his American patrons, Mubarak wants to be recognized as Washington's anointed among the Muslim brethren, and the choice of an Egyptian resort as the site for the gathering came pretty close to doing just that. This preference is not deserved: Egypt has acted mischievously toward Jordan since the kingdom signed a peace treaty with Israel in late 1994, a peace treaty which, unlike Egypt's own treaty with Israel, has been deepened and enriched into something close to real peace. To be sure, the presence of the factota of the new world order on Egyptian soil will be seen as approval, which it is, of Cairo's indiscriminate war against its own Islamic extremists, a harsher war than anything Israel has tried. This approval extends as well to Algeria's bloody combat with its Muslim salvationists and explains its foreign minister's eager attendance. The man at Sharm who knew most about terrorism was Yasir Arafat himself, a certified practitioner of the art of random killing. But he shared none of his knowledge of the subject with his colleagues. He used the podium to criticize Israel and then appealed for money, as if money were a sure antidote to terrorism and fundamentalism. It is easy to grasp why Arafat pushes this idea: it's a scam for which almost everyone will fall. But it is also an insult to the faithful. All of the Middle Easterners were agreed on the locus for terror in their region. And Peres named the address: Iran. The Saudis, Omanis, Bahrainis, Qataris, Turks and Americans were happy to assent. We do not for a moment exonerate Iran, which has left a trail of terror, like Arafat's PLO in years past, everywhere. But the fingering of Iran muddles the picture the visiting statesmen were trying to paint of Iran's steadfast ally, Syria. Oh yes, Syria was absent; Hafez Assad is uncomfortable in large assemblies. But he is, as everyone (especially the Americans) said, committed to peace, too. Why, then, does Hamas operate freely from Damascus? For that matter, why has our government not yet closed the channels, many of them tax exempt, through which Hamas continues to receive American money? These are important questions, but they are not the only questions. Palestinian terror is not simply a matter of funding and political sponsorship. It springs from a delusion about ultimate, total victory over the Jews. It is this delusion to which, given what he says when he speaks to his own people in his own language, Arafat still seems to cling.



FUMBLE: After passing time on the bench during the deficit-crushing GOP revolution, Jack Kemp, the old quarterback, was clearly looking to get into the game. Along comes the "pro-growth" campaign of Steve Forbes, an ideal vehicle for Kemp given his limited cachet with the Dole-Gingrich, anti-supply side establishment in Washington. So what does Kemp do? He sits out Dole's darkest primary hour, waiting to endorse Forbes until the race is a near formality. Four days later he hints that Forbes may be quitting, causing Malcolm Jr. to wipe off his ever-present grin and brand him "totally, 100 percent repudiated." He flees the campaign trail for damage control. And then Forbes quits anyway! Credit Kemp for not slavishly falling in line with Dole's inevitability like other Republicans—including longtime Forbes pal Christie Todd Whitman, who abandoned her fellow Garden State plutocrat for a shot at being Dole's running mate. But by backing his party's non-nominee, and then shooting him in the foot, Kemp has pulled off an act of spectacular self-immolation. Almost as good as Reaganomics.

GRIST FOR PAT'S MILL:

Del Monte Foods to can 150 employees

—San Francisco *Business Times*, February 29.
(Thanks to Richard Carell of San Francisco, California.)

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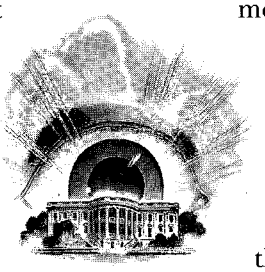
BIG BOY

By Matthew Cooper

One of the leitmotifs of covering Bill Clinton is waiting—not just waiting for the tardy Clinton to show up at a speech, but waiting for some big scandal. During the campaign in 1992, when the draft story broke, there was always the feeling in the press corps that more would come out and the guy would be finished. Ditto with women. What happened instead is that the basic outline of the story would get out, more details would follow and, eventually, people would lose interest. We still don't know everything about how Clinton avoided military service in Vietnam, but we know the basic elements of the story, and no reporter feels obligated to ferret out the last detail. The same goes for Whitewater, which has followed a similar course. The story waxes and wanes; at times it recedes into the white noise of news where perennials like the Kurds or the North Korean nuclear program seem to hover. Then it becomes a big deal again.



In a sense, Whitewater is over. It's possible, I suppose, that Hillaryites Susan Thomases and Maggie Williams could get indicted for perjury, for having feigned dim memories before the Senate committee. It's possible, too, that some sort of smoking document is yet to be unearthed. But, at this point, the story is pretty much out there. Remember, we're still not entirely sure what the plumbers were looking for in the Watergate, and we're still not entirely sure of what Reagan knew about Iran-Contragate and when he knew it. The same can be said of Whitewater: the fundamental outlines we know, but some mystery will always remain.

It is that element of mystery, as much as anything, that worries White House staffers. Most of the people I've spoken with in the Clinton entourage have no better idea what lies at the end of the Whitewater trail than does the average reader of *The New York Times*.

The new book by James Stewart, *Blood Sport*, puts flesh on the skeleton of the Whitewater story. Stewart, an extraordinarily talented reporter with a rare ability to both write an absorbing narrative and understand complex financial transactions, made his name with his *fin d'eighties* work, *Den of Thieves*, which chronicled the fate of Michael Milken and other notorious financiers. Perhaps because he had trained his guns on these icons of the Reagan years, Susan Thomases reached out to the Pulitzer-winning Stewart to write a book about Whitewater, apparently expecting a sympathetic account. This did not turn out to be good strategy.

Stewart paints a portrait of the Clintons that is unflattering, but as *Time*'s editors acknowledge in their introduction to the excerpts: "Anyone looking for evidence that might indict Bill or Hillary Clinton will be disappointed." The Clintons, in Stewart's excerpts, are preternaturally ambitious. They fight. Occasionally, a shoe is hurled. Clinton, hopelessly adolescent, is amazed that a former "fat boy in the Big Boy jeans" can, as a precocious pol, attract women. And they are eager to get their hands on quick cash, which leads them into a deal with the now infamous Jim and Susan McDougal. Stewart relies heavily on the McDougals in his book, which seems a risky choice. After all, McDougal, once a dashing banker, is now diagnosed as manic-depressive; he suffers from acute memory loss—points that *Time*'s rival, *Newsweek*, is only too happy to make. Susan McDougal, for her part, is facing a lawsuit charging that she embezzled money from the conductor Zubin Mehta. Stewart, though, is convinced that he's got it right. "What he remembers, he remembers well," Stewart told me of McDougal. What's more, the White House itself suggested to Stewart that McDougal's memory was still quite sharp.

As for potential crimes, the Clintons, Stewart claims, hyped the value of the Whitewater property when they went to apply for a loan. If they did so knowingly, it would be a crime. Bill, Stewart contends, really did solicit the business of Madison Guaranty. The White House disputes these charges, but even if they were true it's hard to see this as earth-shattering. A lot of people thought Stewart's would be the book that'd bring down the Clintons. In the end, it's probably going to cause less damage to the White House than Bob Woodward's *The Agenda*, which cemented the conventional wisdom that the Clinton White House was chaotic. (In retrospect, of course, Woodward's book could also be read as an account of how Clinton, however clumsily, split the difference between deficit hawks and investment types and came up with a formula that helped create 8.4 million jobs.)

When it comes to Whitewater, there's plenty of blame to go around. The Clintons acted like pols, like Lamar Alexander. They tried to make money through connections and means that had a certain stench. Smart Clinton staffers made some idiotic moves. George Stephanopoulos's charmed résumé nearly came to a dramatic end when he erupted over the appointment of Jay Stephens as the head of the RTC's investigation. Stephens, it turned out, filed a report that gave credence to the Clintons' claims that they'd done nothing wrong. Then there's Al D'Amato, the "ethically challenged junior senator from New York," to use Pat Buchanan's phrase. His hearings have dragged on longer than Iran-Contra, and where has he gotten? The Dems ought to extend the life of the committee for a few more months but call it quits after that. There's Ken Starr, whose

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appointment came under dubious circumstances, what with the involvement of federal Judge David Sentelle. And there are any number of pathetic sideshows. At the Little Rock trial of Arkansas Governor Jim Guy Tucker and the McDougals, one of the jury alternates wears a "Star Trek" uniform to court every day. Sometimes the White House seems just as weird. Could the Clinton staff manage the First Lady any worse? Stewart complained that access to the First Lady was thwarted once it became clear that he was not going to be a patsy. The White House, Stewart contends, dissembled in the extreme. "This was the first time that people have gone off the record to give me information that proved to be false ... if it wasn't knowingly false, it was negligently false." When it came to fact-checking his story, for instance, Stewart says the White House offered "no cooperation." That's typical. They're perennially trying to spin. When I covered the Clinton White House for *U.S. News and World Report*, the First Lady would only agree to an interview if we would refrain from using her photo on the cover. The magazine rightly refused.

Thanks to Stewart, we get Whitewater: ambitious couple cuts corners. No capital offense—probably—but enough indiscretions to make you quesy. •

ON THE HILL

DOLE'S PASS

By Abigail Thernstrom

From the way Newt and company are tiptoeing around, you'd think the Republicans were proposing something radical. But the Equal Opportunity Act of 1996 is tame stuff. The bill, introduced by Bob Dole and Representative Charles Canady of Florida, rids the federal government of racial and gender preferences. No preferences in federal employment, contracts or subcontracts. No preferences masquerading as numerical goals or timetables, either. In short, no use of race or sex to determine who gets what when the federal government is footing the bill.

But nothing in the legislation would stop Massachusetts Governor Bill Weld from maintaining affirmative action in state government. Nor would it prevent Corning Glass from basing its evaluation of managers in part on their minority hiring record. President Neil Rudenstine could still aggressively pursue "diversity" at Harvard. The legislation would affect only federal programs. There are those on the political right who want much more—to prohibit affirmative action remedies, for instance, when plaintiffs prevail in a private employment discrimination suit brought under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. But they won't get that. For now, Dole/Canady is the only anti-preference legislation with a chance of passing Congress, and even its fate is uncertain.

Most Americans don't like racial preferences, and most politicians—Democratic and Republican—dislike discussing that dislike. From the Democratic point of view, the more left unsaid the better; the survival of race-based policy has, from the start, depended on an enforced code of silence. And Republicans have also appeared uncomfortable with the issue, afraid that the public doesn't really mean what it so clearly says. The Republican National Committee talks of commissioning focus groups and new polls—as if they would reveal some dangerous but hitherto hidden political truth.

The reality is that, if the GOP gets its bill to the floor (which now looks likely), it will not only receive overwhelming Republican support but quite a few Democratic votes as well. Party pressure may prevent them from signing on as cosponsors, but in the crunch it's hard to see Blue Dog Democrats like Gary Condit of California and Collin Peterson of Minnesota in the House and Connecticut Senator Joseph Lieberman saying no to a clear and principled statement against discrimination. In addition, a number of moderate Republicans are now on board. Among them: New York's Susan Molinari, Jim Kolbe of Arizona, Marge Roukema of New Jersey and, most importantly, Tom Campbell of California, who previously disappointed conservatives by backing the 1990 Civil Rights Act.

What has changed? To begin with, the civil rights groups have overplayed their hand. It is now evident that they like quotas, even for legislative bodies. They could have pushed for subtle race-conscious gerrymandering, but instead they've supported outlandish, bug-splat districts.

"Everybody working on civil rights has a siege mentality," Nancy Kreiter, research director of Women Employed, a women's advocacy organization, said recently. The chairman of the EEOC complains that "Nobody gives a crap about us"; not even the White House returns his calls. And civil rights groups can no longer count on the Supreme Court, either. The Court has now curbed the racial classifications of which these groups are so fond.

Set-asides and other affirmative action policies—yesterday a permanent fixture of our political landscape—are now constitutionally suspect. The public's deep distrust of racial sorting has spread to the law.

Representative Barney Frank of Massachusetts, an articulate, clever, combative liberal who serves on the House subcommittee that last week approved the Equal Opportunity Act, has emerged as the bill's most able opponent. But Frank has been reduced to arguing that the act would eliminate the affirmative action programs of the U.S. Armed Services. "It is ironic to observe," he wrote in a "Dear Colleague" letter on January 23, that admirers of Colin Powell now support the passage of a

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bill that would outlaw the "valuable program" that helped make the general's career.

Not to worry, its proponents could answer. Draft an amendment that would allow the military to continue its distinctive brand of affirmative action: its use of goals that are not quotas and have no timetables attached. We'll support such an amendment, Canady could say with a clear conscience, if you will sign on to the remaining 98 percent of the bill. Of course Frank won't. But he and his allies are in a bind. It's not easy to defend the Eisenhower Exchange Fellowship Program, 10 percent of whose funds "shall be available only for participation by individuals who are representative of United States minority populations." That's a quota.

Frank and friends may not have to confront these unpalatable realities, however. The House leadership has not yet embraced the bill, perhaps because the Speaker is ambivalent. The party should "spend four times as much effort reaching out to the black community ... as compared to the amount of effort we've put into saying we're against quotas and set-asides," he said last August. And in that spirit, at a packed February 27 press conference, Republican Representatives J.C. Watts of Oklahoma and Jim Talent of Missouri unveiled the outline of a bill titled "The Community Renewal Project."

The legislation, yet to be filed, will focus on three broad themes: moral and family renewal, personal economic empowerment and fostering private charity. Among its provisions: in areas with high rates of unemployment and poverty, it will establish "renewal communities" in which local governments work with neighborhood organizations and private charities to improve services, reduce crime and cut bureaucratic red tape. Suspending permit requirements for street vendors and small businesses will unleash inner-city entrepreneurship. The bill will encourage bank lending, provide a new tax credit for charitable giving to private organizations that aid the poor and allow federal drug rehabilitation funds to go to church-affiliated programs.

Watts and Talent would probably be happy if their wide-ranging, ambitious proposal became a substitute for the Equal Opportunity Act. Watts, one of two black Republicans in the House, is clearly uncomfortable with the proposed ban on all federally sponsored racial preferences. And, perhaps, along with the Speaker, he believes that blacks will flock to a GOP that offers a positive program to beleaguered communities.

There is nothing wrong with this decision to compete with the Democrats for the mantle of the compassion party. But it won't succeed unless the GOP changes the terms of the debate and breaks the perceived link between compassion and Big Government. Ending race-based preferences is an important part of this effort and represents a gift to minority and white citizens alike. Republicans truly serious about equality will reject all forms of group-think. A society conceived of as a confederation of racial and ethnic groups is inevitably hierarchical; only individual citizens can be equal.

The GOP, as Colin Powell has tried to remind Americans, was once the party of Lincoln. It shouldn't run from tough racial issues. If Senator Dole, as the leading Republican presidential contender, doesn't fight for the good legislation he introduced, he's no leader. And, if rank-and-file Republicans in the first Congress they have controlled since 1954 can't pass this bill after arguing for at least fifteen years that racial preferences violate fundamental American principles, they should forever hold their peace.

ABIGAIL THERNSTROM is a Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute.

Downsizing, Downsized.

—Composed from the pages of *The New York Times*.

The lawyers heard first.
It wasn't even something they could articulate,
they said, it was just there, a given, like
the air itself. There was some rustling and murmuring
in the room. To the survivors, the place
seemed suddenly cold. I think it all has to do
with Wall Street.

More people are bowling than ever. Like
a clicking odometer on a speeding car,
the number twirls higher nearly each day. There are
seminars. There are also town meetings.
There are counselors at the ready. It can be
confusing, living in Dayton in 1996.

He has plaques for excellent work,
certificates for perfect attendance
and a transistor radio. He is still
a Republican. But he is not the man he was.
He has seen too much. The transmission
in the Mercedes slips so badly that sometimes
he has to beg it to roll. He wishes
his dog, Scooter, had not died. Scooter
was good company. He is suffused with anger.
Man, this is the 90's.

She sat alone, surrounded by 14 empty desks,
feeling as if she were in one of those
creepy end-of-the-world movies. Asked to explain just
what it is she does now, she struggles, settling
finally on a label she invented: a mind,
body, spirit healing facilitator.
What we are experiencing, she says,
with all its thrashing and turmoil,
is the death rattle of what we knew.
She spent years finding the perfect curtains.

James and Gayle ate fried dough rolled
in powdered sugar at a joint called
Pontillo's. He tells her of the need to be competitive,
and she nods. They make pottery. They have stopped
using all but one credit card.
The Chevelle sits in the garage now,
gathering dust. There are times when she wishes
they had never left Batavia.

For weeks, a man
sat in his office with the lights turned off,
clutching a newspaper. The sepulchral air
was getting to him. He was in serious
love with a good-looking woman who loved
to dance. He was replaced by Lars Nyberg,
a Swede.

PAUL TOUGH

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"A brilliant, incisive, insightful, and erudite critique of the 'hustle' that is Afrocentrism."
—CLARENCE E. WALKER, University of California, Davis

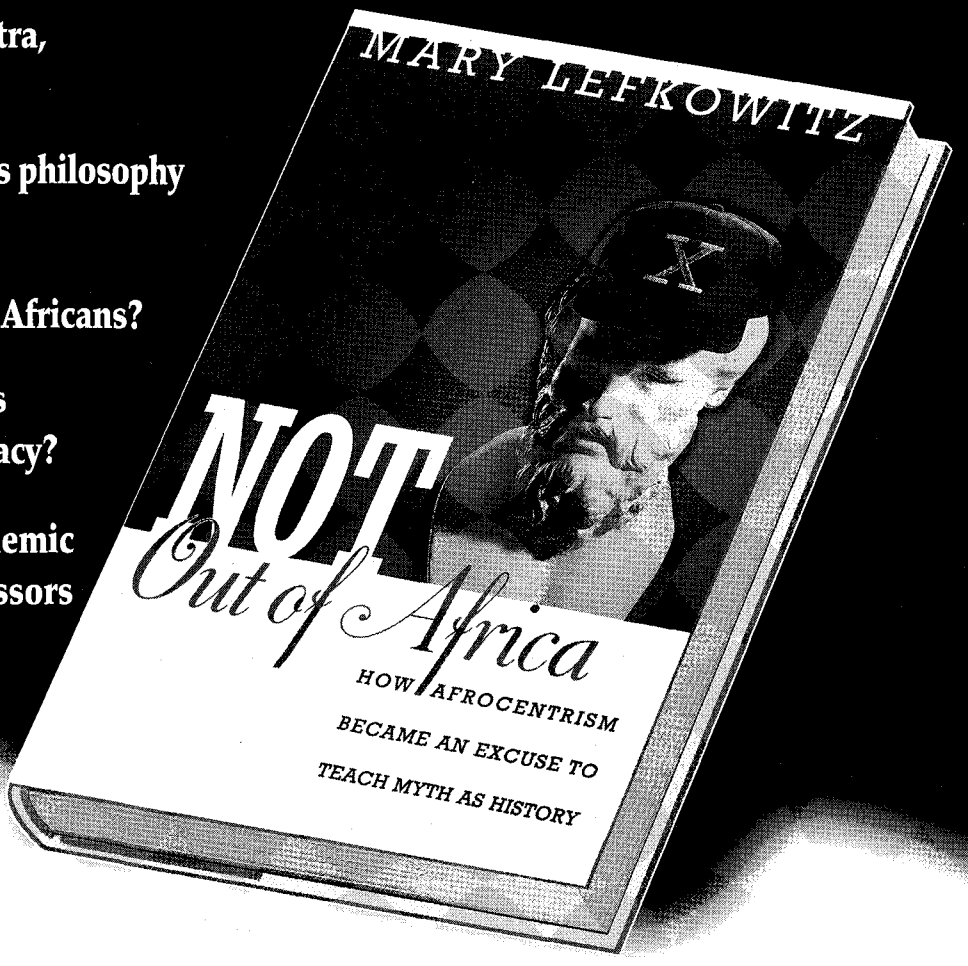
Were Socrates, Cleopatra, and Hannibal black?

Did Aristotle "steal" his philosophy from Egypt?

Was Plato educated by Africans?

Did the ancient Greeks espouse white supremacy?

What happens to academic standards when professors teach myth instead of fact?



Today, in America's colleges, the history of Western civilization is being rewritten to suit a racial conspiracy theory. And, because it's being done in the fashionable name of multiculturalism, no one has had the courage to protest. Until now.

Mary Lefkowitz, a leading classical scholar, blows the whistle on the myth-makers in *Not Out of Africa*. This calm, closely reasoned book evaluates current Afrocentric theories, from the totally unsupportable (that Socrates was of African descent) to the seemingly plausible (that Greek culture was borrowed, or "stolen," from Egypt).

By carefully tracing these misconceptions to their sources in the writings of ancient historians, early churchmen, 18th-century Masons, and 20th-century black separatists, Lefkowitz delivers a crushing rebuttal of Afrocentrism and a ringing defense of open inquiry and responsible scholarship.

"Anyone interested in learning about how extreme the falsification of history for politically correct motives has become will savor *Not Out of Africa*."
—ROGER KIMBALL, *Wall Street Journal*

"Combines a learned demolition of various 'politically correct' historical fantasies with a thoughtful inquiry into questions of historical method and of academic freedom. Anyone perplexed by multicultural education should read it."
—ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR.

"If truth mattered in this controversy, her book would end the debate."
—GEORGE F. WILL, *Newsweek*

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LOSERS

By Michael Lewis

March 7:

Today is the first and only day of what began in Buchanan's romantic imagination as a full-week bus tour through the Old South. The Pitchfork Express, he called it, then further announced to anyone who would listen, "I'm gonna look like something out of *Deliverance* getting off that bus with my pitchfork." I was fully prepared to squeal like a pig. But, save for a glorious moment when a Buchanan aide asks if we would like to watch one of his Creationist tapes on the bus monitors, the Pitchfork Express rolls along pretty much like any other political bus tour of Tennessee. The trouble with a long, slow, winding, populist journey is that there is too much space to cover and too little time to cover it; and in any case the media prefers a series of two-minute interviews to a documentary film. The Republican primary isn't really designed for populism.

The man is, however. Not five minutes into his first speech in the school gym of Knoxville's Christian Academy Buchanan has the crowd of creamy-skinned teenagers stomping on the bleachers, waving signs about trade and taxes they couldn't possibly have thought up themselves and screaming at full blast, "Go! Pat! Go!" and "Get the pitchforks!" Then, in a rare moment of silence, a voice from the crowd shrieks out: "Don't support the nominee!"

Buchanan looks up. You can see him revving the engine, feeling the strength of the machine beneath him. Then he lets out the clutch. "Here's what we do," he says. "We go to San Diego. We break the doors open to the party. We take it over!"

I'm almost sure he didn't plan to say it; it's Fort Sumter all over again. Immediately after the morning speech the reporters pick up their cell phones and call their counterparts on the Dole campaign. They, in turn, inform Dole that Buchanan plans to take over the party in San Diego. Dole snaps back to his reporters that Buchanan is fracturing the Republican Party. This is relayed back to Buchanan, who says, "I don't need a lecture from Bob Dole about what it means to be a loyal Republican." In a matter of hours the two camps are rent beautifully by a process designed to fuel strife and discontent. Buchanan refuses to return calls from Republican Party pooh-bahs (when he is in a giving vein, he has his sister return them on his behalf), but he is happy to mix it up through intermediaries. By the end of the week he will have bought himself a mechanical parrot—a bird with a battery pack—that he will take on stage with him to squawk back at him his best lines about trade and the culture war. Bob the Parrot, he calls it.

Toward the end of the day, as the sun is setting over the brown foothills, I receive an urgent message from the Taylor campaign: Morry is pulling out tomorrow morning and endorsing Dole. It was never clear where Morry would concede defeat. He owns homes in Illinois, Michigan and Florida; he has his campaign headquarters in Iowa; and he has factories in Tennessee, California and God knows where else. Now we know: the candidate will concede in Detroit.

March 8:

I flew to Detroit at the crack of dawn. There is no sign of life in the lobby of the Holiday Inn when I arrive. I find him on the board of special events, misspelled in white plastic letters, between a pair of sales conferences: MORREY TAYLOR EVENT. He was in the Jefferson Room, as it turned out.

Of the twenty-five chairs in the room, nineteen are empty. There is Morry's wife, a Dole man, a pair of local photographers and two reporters, one from the Detroit *Free Press*, the other from a local radio station. Morry stands rakishly before his audience with his arm draped over the podium and a cup of coffee. He nods grimly when I walk in. He is still angry, and rightly so. A few weeks ago I repeated in print a fallacious story I had picked up from *The New York Times*, which had picked it up in turn from the Associated Press, which had taken it from *Foster's Daily Democrat*, in New Hampshire. The story was that Morry, on a school visit, had poked fun at a girl who stuttered. ("Sp-sp-spit it out, girl," he was quoted as having said to her, after she had tried and failed to ask him a question.)

Even though there were three journalists on hand, no word of the event appeared until five days after it supposedly occurred. Then, prodded by their teachers, the children wrote a letter to *Foster's Daily Democrat* complaining about Morry. The letter was transformed into a story in the paper about the girl with the stutter. (The paper later conceded, too late, that the girl didn't stutter.) Within a week CNN was asking Morry about it.

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And so here, in microcosm, was one of the main problems of campaign journalism. It is all done on the fly by people who don't have time to double-check anything, and so once a mistake is made it gets repeated over and over again. In my experience almost every defining moment—Dole's comment in a New Hampshire factory that he hadn't expected voters to care about jobs and trade, for instance—is in some way distorted in the retelling. Whatever the truth was, it gets lost in the myth that grows up around it. All I could say to Morry when he called to shout at me was that "I ap-ap-ap-apologize."

Now I can see that it isn't enough because as I arrive Morry is ripping into journalists in a way that he didn't used to; he sounds almost like a normal candidate. "They write whole editorials, and they never even met you," he says to the reporter from the Detroit *Free Press.* "They can be just running off with something someone else has said. And it could be *totally* wrong." He finds me in the back of the room and fixes me with a stare. "There's a perfect example," he says. "Sitting right there. Michael Lewis."

"I didn't treat you so badly," I say, uneasily. Thinking: *I flew to Detroit at six in the morning for this?*

"You see," he says, scornfully, "there he goes again—trying to defend himself."

But soon enough Morry moves on to his endorsement of Dole, and it is a curious thing. In the first place, the speech doesn't come across as the Dole people had hoped. The Dole campaign—which is really not much more than a series of these endorsements—had said only that there would be a big announcement today in Michigan, leaving it to the press to assume that Dole would be endorsed by Governor John Engler. The Michigan polls were showing Buchanan running close, largely thanks to his views on trade. The Dole people had wanted the world to see Morry attacking Buchanan on trade. But one of Morry's people mistakenly let the cat out of the bag and, instead of Morry banging on Buchanan in front of the nation's media, the Dole people got me and two other reporters watching Morry talk about whatever he wanted to. They were lucky to have that. Morry's views on trade are very similar to Buchanan's—he advocates building a custom's house in the middle of Nebraska through which all Japanese goods must be cleared. Like all of Morry's decisions, his Dole endorsement is driven by his instincts rather than his analysis. He likes Buchanan, but he likes Dole more.

At length it emerges that Dole and Morry spoke on stage before the big debate in Iowa. While every other candidate was doing whatever he could to make Dole uneasy in his skin, Morry leaned over and told Dole he planned to endorse him—back when Dole was NAFTA's biggest fan. "And at that time, the senator said to me," Morry said, " 'You know, Morry, when I was out here at the straw poll in Ames last summer all I seen was Gramm signs and your signs. I had no Dole signs.' And I said to the senator, 'Yeah, but I'll tell you something, senator. You remember that man that stood up in the front row, cheering you on and wanted to shake your hand when you first got down here? That was my father. He served in World War II. And so you had one supporter. He would vote for me, but he was more excited to see you.' And so that's what I told the senator."

We all have a fantasy, and it is profitably exploited by Hollywood, that if only an honest and genuinely free man with a heart of gold ran for president, everything in the world would be put aright. Well, now we know what happens when an honest and genuinely free man with a heart of gold runs for president. He spends $6.5 million dollars and gets 7,000 votes. "I probably got more bang for my dollar than all of them combined," Morry concludes. "Except Dornan. The mad bomber. He spent nothing."

Then he pauses, and his Cheshire Cat smile reappears. "But I beat him."

March 11:

The press has vanished to the point where Buchanan can't afford to charter a plane. Buchanan had sixty journalists with him when he left New Hampshire and maybe forty-five last week in Florida. Now there are only twenty-three. Twelve of them are the obligatory crews from the networks and CNN—and six of those say they'll be gone by Wednesday. The strange thing is that the crowds keep turning up, with almost no help from the Buchanan campaign. Twelve hundred in Dallas, 1,000 in Houston, 1,400 in Memphis and tonight, in the church of the Christian Heritage Academy in Oklahoma City, there are somewhere north of 2,000, every one a fanatical loyalist. Dole attracts journalists but not people; Buchanan attracts people but not journalists. And once again he demonstrates that joy and anger are closer to each other than either of them is to indifference. The crowd knows all of its hero's best lines and responds to them on cue, like the audience of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show.*

"You know what the Founding Fathers would have said?" Pat asks.

"Lock and load!" they scream back at him.

"Lock and load," he says, more like a teacher concurring with an excellent pupil than a candidate.

I am beginning to feel at these Buchanan rallies as I imagine Cézanne must occasionally have felt when he stared up at Mont Saint-Victoire in the morning: How many different ways can you paint the same mountain? But, as Cézanne knew deep down in his obsessive heart, there is no end of ways you can see if you just keep on looking. As always, Buchanan attracts a surprisingly prosperous and ordinary crowd; if you closed your ears to their roiling enthusiasm you might think you were at a Dole event. But you're not. The central fact about the Buchanan supporters is that they feel they have no power. Some part of their feeling is no doubt the response of a psychotic mind to the complications of modern life. But another part of it is perfectly legitimate and endemic to minority life in a democracy. The people don't rule. The majority does. It's for just this

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reason—that, ultimately, they won't win—that groups of people whose interests are not remotely similar can afford to join together into a single political movement. But the closer the movement gets to actual power, the more likely it is to fracture to bits. The evangelical Christian in the tweed jacket with the Buchanan sign looks first to his right, where he sees a raving lunatic, and then to his left, where he finds an unemployed worker, and asks: Do I want *him* to have his finger on the button?

There is one other quixotic sight on Buchanan's brief visit to Oklahoma City. On the twenty-first floor of an office tower, a few miles from where the bomb exploded, is a strange room. It is a smaller version of a "Geraldo" set, a couple of dozen chairs and a large empty stage. But in the middle of the stage sits a desk, and at the desk beneath three harsh spotlights sits Pat Buchanan with his feet crossed beneath his chair. He's facing away from where the audience would be and looking up at the top of the wall. There, barely discernible, is the black eye of a camera—more like a monitor at a convenience store than a television camera. In the next hour Buchanan delivers maybe twenty rapid interviews into the black eye, which beams them via satellite to more than 1,000 television stations. Every few minutes one interview ends and another begins.

What's odd about it is that we can see nothing except the black eye high on the wall. Buchanan alone can hear the questions, through his earpiece. The other four people in the room—Shelley and three journalists—sit listening to Pat, amid pregnant pauses. The game is to try to guess what he has been asked. It is not difficult.

"This murder was on a massive scale," he is saying when I arrive. "Certainly anyone who knows as much as I do about Treblinka knows that."

Pause ...

"Uh-huh, uh-huh ... "

Pause ...

"Colin Powell has only been a Republican for three months. He's declared he would not support me."

Pause ...

"If he does that, he's going to have the fight of his life on his hands in San Diego."

Pause ...

"I'm driving a good old American Cadillac."

At this point he swivels and looks at me and says, "Well, look who's turned up again," offering an opening to ask him the shortest question about his past performances I can think of: " 'The ashes of our fathers and the temples of our Gods'—where did that phrase come from?"

"Macaulay," he says. "Men do battle against fearful odds for the ashes of our fathers and the temples of our Gods." Then he pauses all by himself. "A great phrase. Yes, sir. I'll think of the whole quatrain in a minute."

"Hello. Who we got here?"

Pause ...

"Walter? Hello, Walter."

Pause ...

"Is that you, Walter?"

Pause ...

"No one has approached me or even talked to me about stepping out of this race. My sister got one call from someone at the Dole campaign asking if we wanted to have lunch. We said we're not doing lunch right now; we're campaigning."

Pause ...

"Walter! Walter! Use your head, Walter! Look, how can a speech by a defeated candidate on a night where the approval rating of the nominee jumped 10 percent be said to hurt the nominee?"

Pause ...

> Rally behind what, Walter? What ideas, Walter? What vision, Walter? And what agenda? What exactly does Bob Dole stand for? The Republican Party, Mr. Dole says, is in a battle for its heart and soul. He is right. We have ideas, vision, we got a broad agenda of issues. From campaign finance reform, judicial reform, term limits, protective orders, a new America-first foreign policy, no more unfair trade deals. What about going and debating these all out in San Diego, and, if we are a party of ideas, why not have a debate on ideas and unify it behind a broad conservative agenda? We are *eight months* before the election, and people are saying that if Pat Buchanan runs for two more weeks the Republican Party is in trouble. Is it that *weak* an institution that it can't stand two more weeks of debate? What would Senator Dole have been doing now if we'd *won* in Georgia? Demand we get out for party unity? I mean, if I had been demanding after New Hampshire, 'Look I'm the front-runner, get out, Mr. Dole, you're dividing the party,' people would have laughed. He doesn't have a majority of the delegates right now. He won't and can't, I believe, until after California, which is two weeks from now. Let's take a look at the situation then. But I think we're going to go to that convention, I know we are, and fight for what we believe in. That's what people voted for us for. They voted for us not simply to give us the nomination 'cause they wanted us to have it. But also to fight to represent them. And we're going to do that.

Pause ...

I think to myself: Ever since it became certain—or nearly so—that Dole would bag the nomination, the main question that is asked of the others is, why on earth are you still in it? But this emphasis on who wins is a form of madness. In the first place, it's not like the stock market, when you can make money by correctly guessing a winner; in the second, the winner in this case has had no effect whatsoever on the debate. The debate has been framed entirely by the losers, especially Buchanan. I don't know whether this is the way American politics has always worked; maybe we just live in times when the fear of losing is so all-consuming that winners live their lives too scared to do much of anything. Maybe you have to be scared to win.

"Dallas live?"

There is no other sign that Walter is gone except that Buchanan turns to me and recites:

"How can men die better
Than facing fearful odds
For the ashes of their fathers
And the temple of their Gods?" •

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LEANER, CLEANER LIBERALS

By Jacob Weisberg

Those who do remember the past may be condemned to repeat it anyway. In uncanny fashion, our politics seem to be recapitulating the scenario of a century ago. In 1896, the dislocations brought about by industrial capitalism fueled a populist movement that nearly carried William Jennings Bryan to the White House. In 1996, the consequences of deindustrialization drive the populist rebellion led by Patrick Joseph Buchanan, the silver-tongued orator of Chevy Chase.

But, like late-nineteenth-century populism, the late-twentieth-century version fails as a rational response to the problems it says it's concerned about. Bryan's principal answer, the free coinage of silver, was a means of producing inflation: it would have benefited heavily indebted farmers at the expense of the nation as a whole. Buchanan's proposal, like his forerunner Ross Perot's, is protectionism, which would take back from his supporters as consumers whatever it might contribute to them as wage-earners. In both instances, nativism, conspiracy-mongering, race-baiting and anti-Semitism are bound up with the movement. So, too, is a demand for international disengagement that barely camouflages a bellicose nationalism.

But a look at what happened the last time around offers encouragement. While the populists never came to power, their energy was diverted in the more productive direction of Progressivism. The early twentieth-century Progressives borrowed the moral fervor of Bryan's supporters while purging the movement of most of its prejudicial excesses. They took populism's most valid preoccupations—political corruption and economic exploitation—and left the eccentric ones behind. To those problems, the Progressives addressed sensible policies: the prohibition of child labor, the eight-hour workday, the minimum wage, workplace safety, disability compensation and pensions. While they were at it, they checked the might of the trusts, saved the American wilderness and gave women the vote.

The Progressive movement arose not at a moment of crisis, as did the New Deal, but, rather, at a time similar to our own—one of growing aggregate prosperity accompanied by increasingly glaring disparities in wealth. The Progressive era was also a period, like the present one, characterized by disenchantment with the two major parties, though the movement's influence was ultimately felt through them.

Still, though we could use a progressive revival today, there are serious obstacles to its taking place. Both the federal government as an instrument of collective action and the legatees of the Progressive tradition—Democratic Party liberals—stand largely discredited in the public mind. Liberals have, for the most part, failed to come to grips with what this loss of public trust means. Most persist in thinking that disenchantment is the product of conservative propaganda, an irrational mood that can be dissolved at the level of public relations.

But faith in government is not a given, it is earned. If liberals want an activist government again, to take on the problems of rising social inequality or stagnating middle-class incomes, of the medically uninsured or the urban underclass, they will first have to reassess their own governing philosophy. It's not enough to get rid of a failed program now and again. Rather, liberals must relearn the habits of restraint.

Limited government is too important an idea to cede to conservatives. It's the essence of the liberal tradition and an integral part of the American ideal. "In all the American republics the central government is only occupied with a small number of matters important enough to attract its attention," Tocqueville wrote of the Jacksonian Republic. "It does not undertake to regulate society's secondary concerns, and there is no indication that it has even conceived the desire to do so."

The Progressive movement is often viewed as a departure from the tradition of limited power. But, while Progressive thinkers like Walter Lippmann and Herbert Croly did hold an excessive faith in the possibilities of benevolent, "scientific" public administration, they did not advocate unbridled growth in government control. They were motivated by the need to restrain a new kind of power—industrial gigantism—which seemed to threaten the state itself. Progressives asserted the need for a government that could cage the new beast and protect citizens from its ravages. But they

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remained cautious in using the federal tool. "This, I know, implies a policy of a far more active government interference with social and economic conditions in this country than we have yet had," Theodore Roosevelt acknowledged in the first of his "New Nationalism" speeches of 1910. "But I think we have got to face the fact that such an increase in governmental control is now necessary." Roosevelt's own expansion in federal power had been reluctant; he had no good alternative.

It was during the New Deal that liberals began to lose touch with the old habit of limits. As the historian Otis Graham notes in his book *An Encore to Reform*, the surviving Progressives objected to FDR's eagerness to use federal power. They didn't see in him the hesitancy to deploy government shown by his cousin Theodore, or by Woodrow Wilson. Though FDR set the precedent, it still took some time for the idea of comprehensive government to diffuse through society. In his classic work *The End of Liberalism*, Theodore Lowi marks 1961 as the year when what he calls the Second American Republic was born, the moment when consensus enveloped Roosevelt's boundless vision. "This new attitude at its most general level can be described as an eagerness to establish and maintain a national government presence in all aspects of social and economic life," he writes.

By the time Lowi's book was published in 1969, many liberals were arguing openly for an unlimited state, albeit cast in the more attractive terms of the Swedish model. While we never moved toward the redistributive example of northern European countries, we did develop a tendency toward heavy-handed interference in private affairs, a "nanny state," as the Thatcherites liked to call it in England. In the 1970s, a Republican president imposed wage and price controls, enforced by a pay board and a price board; a Democratic one lowered the highway speed limit from 75 mph to 55 mph. Through the early 1990s, government spending and taxes continued to rise every year, both in real terms and as a share of gross domestic product.

The fear of unchecked public-sector growth inspired the Reagan Revolution of 1980 and, when that failed to stop it, the Gingrich Revolution of 1994. If the size of government is not convincingly contained this time around, greater spasms are sure to follow. Liberals cannot realistically hope to use government to answer what they consider to be society's most pressing problems without first making clear that they, too, believe in clearly defined and contained collective action.

The good news is that most of the groundwork for reversing the drift toward ever-bigger government exists within the liberal tradition. Progressivism in its earlier incarnation provides the corrective to the big-government liberalism of the past few decades. If that sounds vague, here are five specific practices new progressives can adopt in pursuit of limited government. Call them five habits of highly effective liberals.

1. *Accepting risk.*

In the old days, risk was part of life. The hazards of poverty, unemployment and disease might be mitigated by government but not eliminated. But, in the 1960s and 1970s, the moderation of the Progressives was supplanted by an unarticulated sense that government was responsible for ensuring health and safety throughout society. The late NEW REPUBLIC writer Henry Fairlie noted this change with respect to the space program. When three Apollo astronauts were killed in a launch-pad fire in 1967, there was no question of abandoning the program. The occupation was understood to be inherently risky. By contrast, the Challenger disaster of 1986 stopped manned space exploration for years. Under the new mindset, the federal government was responsible for every potential hazard. If members of the public, or even members of the military, faced dangers—knowingly or unknowingly, willingly or unwillingly—it was up to Washington to Do Something about it.

There's a chart in the 1979 second edition of Lowi's book that maps the administrative explosion of the early 1970s, under presidents Nixon and Ford. In those years the U.S. adopted legislation to deal with toy safety, egg safety, workplace safety, fish safety, port and waterway safety, boat safety, car safety, medical safety, consumer product safety, unsafe drinking water, the risk of poisoning, the dangers of lead, pesticides, noise pollution, water pollution, consumer fraud, violations of privacy and unscrupulous leasing practices. A case might be made for each of these as a legitimate exercise of federal authority—the people doing collectively what they cannot do individually. But, taken together in a short space of time, they constituted a threat both to liberty and common sense. Liberals failed to recognize that gains in safety can often be won by consumer pressure on the private sector. To take only one example, airbags now come as standard equipment in most American and foreign automobiles not just because Washington mandates them but because consumers want and willingly pay for them. There's sometimes no alternative to federal regulation, but the options should be exhausted first.

In using government to attack risk, liberals have generally been unwilling to honestly address the trade-offs involved. The goal of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, for instance, was "to assure so far as is possible every working man and woman in the nation safe and healthful working conditions and to preserve human resources." The Consumer Products Safety Commission was created two years later to reduce "unreasonable risk" from household products. Workplace and product safety are surely valid public undertakings, areas where government ought to force some reduction in economic output in exchange for protection. But how much? The only truly safe coal mine is a closed coal mine. The only safe chainsaw is no chainsaw. But Congress isn't about to drive whole industries out of existence. Instead, it declares absolutist goals and leaves the details to the bureaucracy, which must accommodate political reality. By making the federal government responsible for vagaries of life over which it can have no real control,

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liberals enhance their reputation as hopeless utopians instead of winning credit for measured gains.

Nor did they learn their lesson in the 1970s. A recent manifestation of this phenomenon has been the crusade to regulate cigarettes out of existence. The surgeon general's warning, adopted in 1964, was part of a traditional public health campaign based upon simple discouragement of an unhealthy practice. It was cheap, and it worked. But it didn't end all smoking. This provoked liberal legislators, led by Henry Waxman of California, to try to treat smokers as wards of the state. In the summer of 1995, President Clinton took a giant step in that direction by accepting a recommendation from FDA administrator David Kessler to classify nicotine as a dangerous drug on the basis of its addictive properties.

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Few things contribute more to the liberal caricature than using such excuses to regulate irrationality. A child cannot grow up in the United States without being instructed in the dangers of cigarettes. Yet people continue to smoke because they find it pleasurable, sexy or whatever. It is part of human nature to make bad choices. We need to accept them. That is not to say that freedom is incompatible with a modicum of paternalism; cigarettes should be kept away from minors, second-hand smoke confined within reason. The government ought to propagandize relentlessly against smoking, as it does. But citizens of a free country have a right to do things that are dumb, even dangerous to themselves, so long as they don't harm others.

2. *Underpromising.*

We ought to ban the following words and phrases from political discourse: "no American," "every American," "always," "never," "cure," "solution," "end" and "guarantee." Part of government's bad name today stems from its habit of making offers too good to refuse and thus impossible to fulfill. In politics, overpromising is worse than simple promise-breaking. When a specific pledge is broken, a politician has broken it and can be held accountable in the next election. But when politicians commit themselves to the fulfillment of broad goals, and those goals go unmet, government itself appears to fail, even in circumstances where the goal was unrealistic and politicians might otherwise be credited with a limited success. If we want to reduce cynicism we should give up the visionary overreach that feeds it.

The unrealistic promise has been a staple of politics since elections were invented. But it is LBJ who deserves the greatest share of blame for the modern, liberal habit of rhetorical inflation. The paradigmatic episode was Johnson's effort to assist the poor, which he couched in the most immoderate rhetoric. It was "an unconditional war on poverty" that would break "the cycle of poverty," assure every American a decent home, end welfare and train the poor to compete for jobs. A war, let alone an "unconditional" one, suggests a fight to the finish in which there is a victor and a vanquished. Poverty does not work that way; it will always exist in one form or another. In any case, the metaphor fails to describe the ill-conceived and underfunded effort that followed from Johnson's words. Judged on its own terms, as Ronald Reagan used to quip, we fought a war on poverty, and poverty won. Of course, that didn't stop Ronald Reagan from declaring a war on drugs, which drugs just as obviously won.

Had Johnson defined his program as a set of ambitious attempts to alleviate misery—which is what the War on Poverty really was—the actual results would probably have been no different. It might have been tougher to sell the effort to the public. But it would also be harder to cite programs that in fact reduced the American poverty rate by half as a basis for opposing renewed efforts. Only if it was a war did we lose it. Senator Edmund Muskie, the author of the Clean Air Act of 1970, declared as its intention "that all Americans in all parts of the country shall have clean air to breathe within the 1970s." Only against that absolutist standard can our efforts to control air pollution be judged a failure. Early in his presidency, Bill Clinton declared as goals a nation in which every student has the opportunity to go to college, every child is immunized, no American goes without health insurance and welfare is replaced by work. He hadn't learned a thing.

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Ungolden age

Historical analogies in American politics are always treacherous if they are taken too literally. Still, there has been enough continuity in our political institutions over the past two centuries for historians to note some recurring patterns of reform, reaction and voter realignment. In the mid-1960s, for example, C. Vann Woodward helpfully described the continuing civil-rights revolution as a Second Reconstruction, a revisiting of some of the basic themes that had dominated politics exactly one century earlier. In a similar spirit, it may be worth considering developments since the demise of the Second Reconstruction in the late 1960s and 1970s as a Second Gilded Age, one that has reached a crisis in 1996 much as the First Gilded Age did in 1896, and one that could well presage the arrival of a new Progressivism.

Certainly the past twenty-five years or so have brought to mind the crassness and cynicism of the original spoilsmen. Whereas a century ago the nation began its encounter with a bewildering urban industrialism, it recently entered into a bewildering edge-city, computer-chip, global post-industrialism, with some familiar symptoms: widening gaps in income and wealth, political corruption and insider-trading scandals on a gargantuan scale, a parvenu culture of ostentation, glitz and celebrity. After deciding, now as then, that the problems of race relations and poverty are beyond government's powers to solve—that, indeed, government action only makes the problems worse—Americans settled down to celebrate the mythic benevolent market as the truest arbiter of who deserves to win or lose in the great national bonanza. Away with the sentimentalism of reform, the doctrine of losers, we have told ourselves; let the shrewd and the domineering actually dominate, and there is no end to what the country can achieve. "Nothing is lost save honor," the Gilded Age buccaneer Jim Fisk proclaimed; "Greed is good," echoed the Keatings and Milkens of the Second Gilded Age.

The parallels become even more striking if we take a closer look at party politics. During the First Gilded Age, political loyalties turned chiefly on cultural divisions that cut across class and region. At the simplest level, party alignments replicated the Civil War, pitting a largely Republican North and Midwest against the Democratic South. But Republicans were also guaranteed the backing of Southern blacks, while the Democrats held the ethnic Catholic (and especially the Irish) vote in the burgeoning Northern cities.

By 1890, the Democrats appeared to be gaining the national political edge, thanks largely to the growth of the urban vote; and, in 1892, Grover Cleveland, who had been defeated for re-election in 1888, regained the White House. But the politics of populism helped to do in the Democrats and went on to shake the Gilded Age party system to its foundations. As early as 1890, distressed farmers in the South and the Midwest, alienated from both major parties, organized independently, elected several sympathizers to governorships and won control of ten state legislatures. Two years later, united under the banner of the new People's Party, the protesters carried four states and won 9 percent of the popular vote for their presidential candidate, James B. Weaver (who ran on a radical platform that demanded, among other things, a progressive income tax and nationalization of the railroads).

The depression of 1893, along with Cleveland's adamant anti-relief and anti-labor stance, encouraged the revolt, and the Democrats suffered huge losses in the congressional elections the following year.

The 1896 presidential election, a debacle for the standard-bearer William Jennings Bryan and the pro-silver and agrarian Democrats he represented, destroyed the Populist movement—but it also marked a transformation in party affairs. Promising that industrial growth and sound money would bring prosperity to all, the Republican nominee, William McKinley, cut deeply into the Democrats' Northern urban base and forged a new national majority that would remain largely intact until the 1930s.

Yet McKinleyism, the quintessence of sober big-business Republicanism, soon faced fresh challenges, above all from a new breed of reformers who envisioned activist measures to curb the ills of industrialism—concentrations of corporate power, devastation of the natural environment, child labor, slums. Theodore Roosevelt, who succeeded the slain McKinley as president in 1901, became the first national political emblem of the sprawling reformism that, by 1910, had acquired the name "Progressive." When Roosevelt's zeal proved too great for the more narrow-minded business-Republican leaders, he was forced to go it alone with his own Progressive Party. The reformist mantle then fell to the Democrats who elected Woodrow Wilson to the presidency in 1912.

What, then, can all this tell us about the politics of the Second Gilded Age? Will a new progressivism, or a new populism, transform the old party alliances as they did last century? The party system's latest crack-up began in earnest (and, more or less, on schedule) with the rise of Ross Perot in 1992. In contrast to the genuinely democratic farmers of the original People's Party, Perot offered up a post-modern faux populism. (See "Pox Populi," TNR, August 9, 1993.) Still, he hit a nerve among middle- and working-class whites who had been battered by stagnating and declining wages, felt anxious about the globalist restructuring of the economy and saw both major parties as sinkholes of corruption. Opting out of the culture wars, Perot declared that the nation's problems were basically economic and political; by joining attacks on the deficit and free trade with calls for government reform, he thoroughly confuted the established political logic of the Second Gilded Age.

Whether Perot will return to the presidential fray this year and how much credibility he retains with the voters remain to be seen. But the tone of politics over the past three years, particularly among the fragmenting Republicans, betrays a fundamental shift since Perot's challenge, with some eerie evocations of a century ago. Some of the leading lights of what passes for the conservative intelligentsia have moved from attacking the welfare state and multicultural liberals toward cruder theories about the genetic and "civilizational" inferiority of blacks and immigrants, recalling such racist classics of the last turn-of-the-century as Thomas Dixon's *The Leopard's Spots* and Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race.* Another group of conservative thinkers, the people who hatched the supply-side hoax of the Reagan years, have found a new front man in Steve Forbes—a social moderate who would flatten one of the lasting legacies of the Progressive era, the graduated income tax, and pull us that much closer to the First Gilded Age. Pat Buchanan, still a ferocious cultural warrior, has done the most to exploit the populist anxieties that surfaced four years ago, substituting the symbolic issue of protectionism for the symbolic issue of the

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silver standard that animated William Jennings Bryan. Unlike the Democrats in 1896, though, the Republican Party of 1996 will resist putting a quasi-populist at the head of its ticket.

It is left to the old party professional Bob Dole to try and hold the pieces together and recapture the White House. But, even in the unlikely event that Dole succeeds, the most interesting Republicans, at least in the short run, will be Newt Gingrich and his band of congressional revolutionaries. Although Gingrich still fights the culture wars, he has also emerged (as E.J. Dionne Jr. suggests in his new book, *They Only Look Dead*) as the closest thing to a McKinley for the twenty-first century, a true believer in the new Third Wave, global-information economy. Gingrich's revolutionism lies precisely in his efforts to align the Republican Party with what he takes to be the dominant classes of the future, much as McKinley and his chief manager, Mark Hanna, did in 1896. The difficulty he faces is that to achieve his revolution, as he sees it, Gingrich must also complete a radical *counterrevolution*, fully liberating the Third Wave capitalists by discarding the entire legacy of Progressive reform dating back to Theodore Roosevelt. Selling that counterrevolution to the voters may depend on whether some reinvigorated form of Progressivism emerges quickly enough to head it off.

In retrospect, Bill Clinton seems all along to have had some intuitive sense of himself as a reborn Progressive, in search of a fresh rationale for modified activist government—or so his liberal supporters might like to believe. And some of the more prominent members of his administration—Al Gore, the environmentalist and reinventer of government, for example, or Robert Reich, retrainer of labor—talk a lot like efficiency-minded Progressive reformers. But, over the first two years of Clinton's term, the results were at best a hodgepodge and at worst a disaster. By winning on the North American Free Trade Agreement but losing on health care, for example, Clinton loomed as the worst nightmare of alienated middle- and working-class voters. Those voters punished him and his party in 1994—an electoral trouncing comparable to the Democrats' in 1894. And, although Clinton has recovered brilliantly, he has done so mainly by promising to fend off the Gingrich counterrevolution—a defensive stance that may win him re-election but that inspires no Progressive crusades. A quick recollection of some of the earlier crusaders' achievements confirms the narrowness of today's liberal reformist vision. Between 1901 and 1920, less than a generation, came the first serious federal efforts to rein in untrammeled corporate power; the enactment of consumer protection laws; the proliferation of expert social commissions; state-level political reforms like initiative, referendum and recall; a thorough reform of the banking system; women's suffrage; and an immense array of urban settlement-house projects. Even taking into account the failed health care initiative, the Clintonian vision of reform seems much flatter.

If the analogy with a century ago holds, however, it would be a mistake to look for a new Progressivism coming from a single president or even a single party. For Progressivism never represented a clear-cut set of political principles; it was always more a mood than a coherent movement. There were big-business and anti-big business Progressives, statist and local Progressives, ethnic working-class and old-stock patrician Progressives. What set them off from the politics of the Gilded Age was not a systematic creed or ideology but a general discontent with the effects of unregulated, atomized power—discontent that could lead to any number of contradictory proposals.

As the historian Daniel T. Rodgers has written, the Progressives' multifarious concerns tended to cluster around three sets of ideas: antimonopolism and a fear of concentrated private power; a concern about social cohesion and the decline of communal bonds; and a drive for social efficiency and the elimination of waste in both government and industry. The politics of Progressivism, in turn, involved heated debates over how best to address these concerns—by regulating the great trusts or by smashing them, by building social bonds to a reinvigorated national state (as Herbert Croly, the founder of this magazine, prescribed) or to local neighborhoods, civic institutions and the family (along the lines of the urban settlement houses).

Without squinting too hard, we can sense some of these clusters surfacing once again, though less, at the moment, among the politicians than among the political intelligentsia—in the neo-Crolyism of a writer like Michael Lind, for example, or in the neo-Tocquevillian concerns about civil society expressed by Robert Putnam and others, or in the government-efficiency ideas of David Osborne.

Some of the forces that helped propel Progressivism at the last turn of the century are fundamentally different or missing altogether today. In the case of race, that's a sign of hope. It's true that the nation's retreat from the Second Reconstruction has led to an ominous heightening of racialized politics. But the seamy side of Progressivism—its association with the formal disenfranchisement and segregation of blacks—is something all but inconceivable today.

What bodes particularly ill for a revived movement today, though, is the absence of a concerted neo-Progressive critique of corporate power. In the heyday of Progressivism, Theodore Roosevelt, no radical, could denounce "the tyranny of mere wealth" and really mean it. Today, such words barely register in mainstream politics, while, on the left, there is nothing approaching even the small but creative socialist movement of a century ago and no figure who commands the respect that Eugene Debs once did. Buchanan, in his own crude way, has lambasted corporate arrogance from the right; and the recent changes at the AFL-CIO and media attention to corporate downsizing could signal a revived labor liberalism. But, so far, the public's mounting anxiety and outrage have been consigned to the political margins.

Missing as well is much of the moral passion for reform that made the Progressives so optimistic that a new and better world was at hand. How and why that idealistic passion faded is a long and complicated story that has yet to find its teller. The last time passion turned up in liberal American politics was in 1968; and it seems to have died with Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. Since then, liberals and leftists have adopted a more cramped attitude about changing the world—in part because of their own sense of political powerlessness; in part because of the fragmentation of reformist efforts into so many finely calibrated interests and identities.

In the absence of a more expansive fervor for reform, and a more direct confrontation with the looming forces of corporate power, the signs of a genuine Progressive revival are weaker than they could be. But clearly the politics of the Second Gilded Age have run out of steam—and that, at least, is cause for cautious optimism.

SEAN WILENTZ

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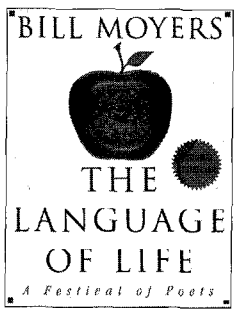

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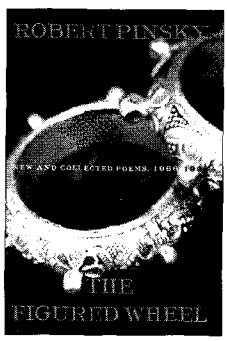

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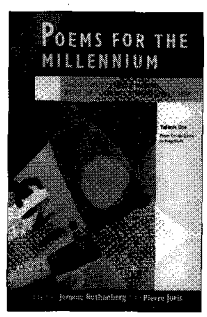

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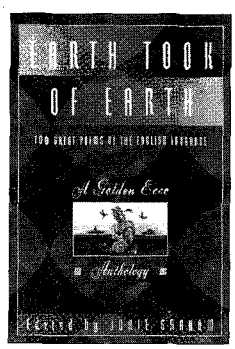

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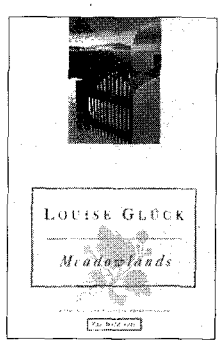

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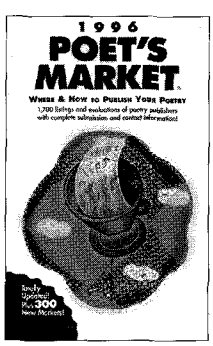

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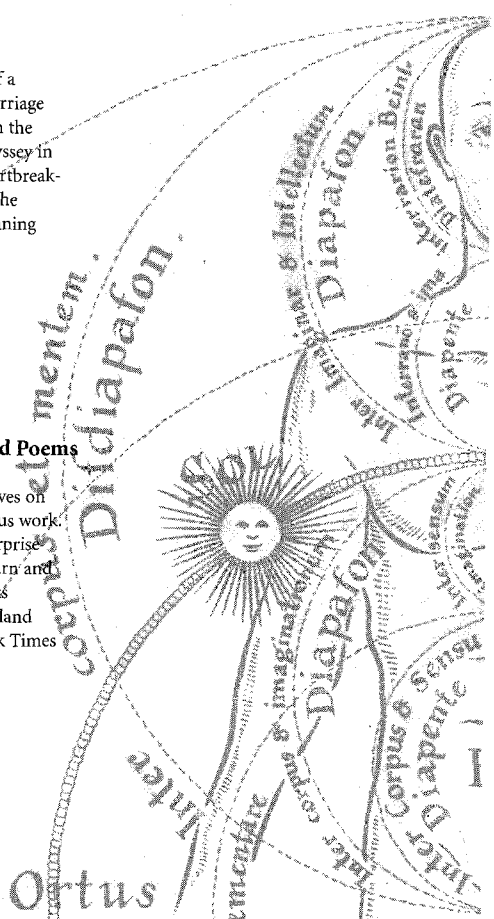

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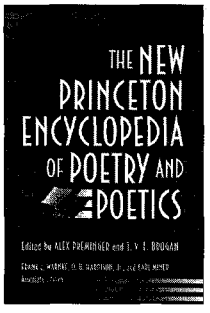

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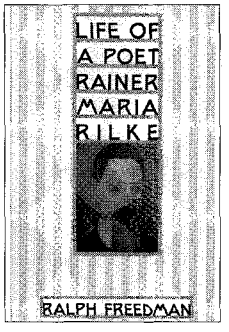

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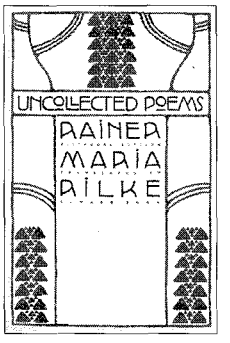

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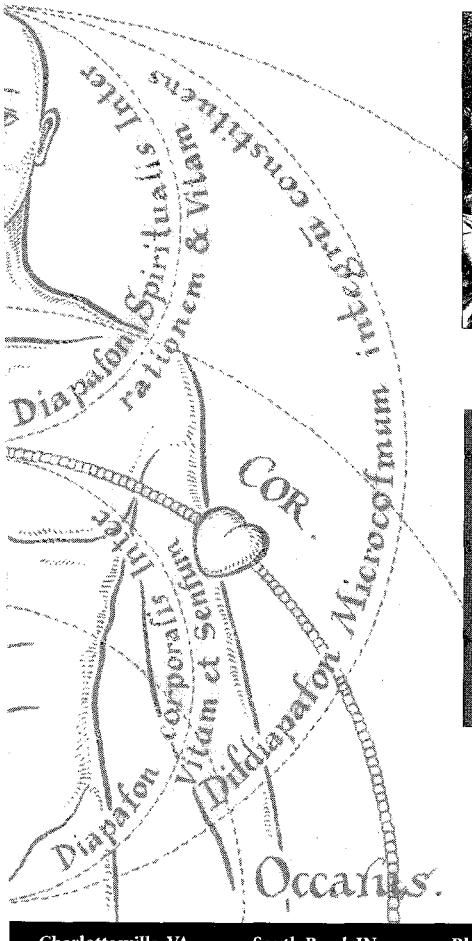

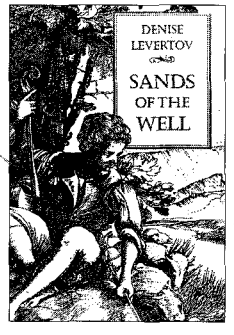

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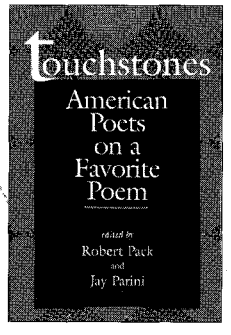

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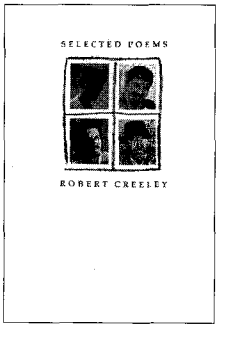

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3. *Saying goodbye.*

In a healthy government, programs would not accumulate like junk in the attic. They would be sorted out in an annual spring cleaning. It's painfully obvious. Efforts should expire when they have accomplished their missions, as well as in cases where they don't work well enough to justify continuation. Instead, we have bureaucratic forts that hold out long after their wars have ended. There are programs still on the books that were designed to help electrify rural areas and to ensure the military supply of helium, which hasn't been a strategic material since World War II.

Vice President Gore's National Performance Review has done an impressive job ferreting out absurdities like the wool and mohair program and the Interstate Commerce Commission as well as mountains of silly rules. But progressives need to be bolder, leading the charge beyond obvious waste to functions that are beneficial but expendable. Do we need a separate system of veterans hospitals? Farm supports? Public television subsidies? There are also new programs that have demonstrably not worked, like Clinton's immunization plan, which was based on the faulty assumption that parents weren't vaccinating their children because of the cost. Zeroing out a program shouldn't depend on proving that it is worthless. Every bit of government spending helps somebody. What liberals need to recognize is that if we want to try new programs someday we have to get rid of old ones first. Wherever possible, programs should be self-liquidating, through sunset laws and sunset clauses. At the very least, programs should have to plead their cases for renewal on a regular basis. The assumption today is that government programs continue until someone notices their fruitlessness or extravagance. We should begin by shooting a few hostages, to show how serious we are about limiting government. One politically powerful formula is to connect future government expansion to government shrinkage. Robert Shapiro of the Progressive Policy Institute identifies $265 billion in budget savings over five years, much of which he dubs "corporate welfare." Sixty percent of those cuts, he argues, should simply be savings that go to reducing the deficit. The rest he would dedicate to a program of new public investments. This is an attractive combination.

4. *Making Congress do it.*

Lowi thinks the Second Republic was made possible by the New Deal-era abandonment of something called the nondelegation doctrine: the principle that Congress cannot pass its responsibility for making law to anyone else. For 150 years, the Supreme Court understood Article One of the Constitution to say so; on this basis it threw out key pieces of the New Deal in several cases, the most famous of which was *Schechter Poultry Co.* v. *United States* in 1935. The court ruled that by giving presidential appointees power to fix prices and set marketing and production quotas Congress was engaging in an unconstitutional handoff of its power. After his re-election in 1936, FDR proposed his infamous court-packing bill to change the court's mind. The bill failed, but the court was successfully intimidated.

Though *Schechter* was never overturned, the nondelegation doctrine became a dead letter. It was replaced by what Lowi calls "unregulated regulation." As a labor-saving device, delegation did for legislators what the washing machine did for the 1950s housewife. Government could now penetrate every nook and cranny of American life in a way that was simply impossible before. In his book *Power Without Responsibility*, David Schoenbrod examines the Clean Air Act as a case study of modern regulation. It was politically impossible for legislators to vote against a goal as noble as clean air, and few did. But, likewise, few relished the trade-offs involved in actually reducing pollution. Delegation seemed to provide a way out. With the 1970 law, they passed the burden of defining what "clean" meant to the EPA and the costs of achieving the to-be-determined standards to the states.

Before long, champions of the act were trying to prevent the EPA from implementing it. Members of the New York delegation who had voted for the law marched across the Brooklyn Bridge to protest a ruling that the city had to impose tolls on its bridges and tunnels to implement it. The EPA was pressured into reversing key interpretations of the act. But the cost of delegation isn't just ineffective law and endless litigation, it's unfairness. The broad public goes unrepresented inside the regulatory agencies. Only moneyed interests, who can afford lawyers and lobbyists, operate effectively within such labyrinths. By evading hard choices about what pollutants to restrict, to what degree and at what economic cost, that Congress betrayed the public and paved the way for the anti-regulatory mania of today's Congress.

Defenders of delegation assert that modern life is too complicated to do without it. How could Congress possibly have time to deal with the myriad details handled by all of the regulatory agencies that now exist? Though this assertion is superficially plausible, there's no real evidence for it. Delegation is itself time-consuming. Under the prevailing model of "narrow" delegation, Congress still has to pass intricate legislation giving the agencies detailed instructions on how to go about their regulating. It deals with this problem by developing its own network of specialists who are fully capable of writing law in place of guidelines for making law. Members of Congress and their staffs stand to save millions of hours they now spend navigating the regulatory thicket on behalf of constituents. In any case, stealing time from such essential duties as showboating at committee hearings and groveling for campaign funds might not be such a bad thing. Sound election-finance reform would free up enough of the average congressman's schedule to do away with delegation and spend more time with the kids as well.

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5. *Fixing a size.*

People who complain about big government object not just to bigness per se but to the potential for growth without end. Progressives should recognize that this is a legitimate concern and answer it by accepting a theoretical limit. Of course, it is naïve to think that government's power is strictly determined by its dimensions. But the aggregate is still meaningful; in a democracy like ours, the size of government, figured by such measures as share of GDP and number of employees, provides a rough approximation of power.

Our federal government spends approximately $1.5 trillion a year, roughly 22 percent of the national economic output. It takes in only about 19 percent. The missing 3 percent is our annual budget deficit. State and local governments add about another 11.5 percent of GDP, bringing government's share of the economy in at just over a third. To give a sense of perspective, in 1979 that number was still under 30 percent, in 1948 less than 20 percent. In Scandinavian countries, by comparison, the government's share of the economy has been as high as 72.5 percent. A government that large is bound to undermine incentives and invade private space. It raises the specter, successfully exploited by George Bush in 1988, of a social-democratic state with excellent benefits but accompanied by high unemployment, epidemic tax evasion and limited potential for growth.

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

A first step toward assuaging suspicions that we are moving toward an all-consuming government is to balance the budget. In political terms, it is only within the context of a balanced budget that the public is likely to approve affirmative government. In economic terms, the debt absorbs too much private capital. In public policy terms, the growing cost of interest on a growing national debt is crowding out the entire domestic discretionary budget. In theory, we don't need to have a balanced budget every year; in a recession, counter-cyclical stimulus is a useful tool. But the economy has existed in a state of Keynesian overstimulation for nearly twenty years. We've discovered that we can't have just a few drinks. Given the reality of the problem, progressives must forswear spending beyond our means, period.

The next thing to do is to indicate how great those means ought to be. Liberals should say that, in peacetime, the activist government they favor is slightly smaller than the one we have now and that we intend for it to stay that size—forever. That's not to say that government can't spend less, just that under normal circumstances it won't spend more. With a one-third rule, government could no longer grow at the expense of the private sector. To develop new programs, we would need either to draw down other efforts, discover new efficiencies or benefit from economic growth. Government must increase the size of the pie if it wants to do more.

To be a Swede means your government takes two-thirds of what the nation produces and gives it back in the form of generous, universal benefits. If you are an American your government claims only half as much. With that it tries to save you from disaster, but your prosperity depends to a greater degree on luck and ability. If Democrats adopted a fixed limit on the size of the public sector, Americans would understand that one party wasn't working clandestinely to turn them into Swedes.

These five easy steps are, of course, not all liberals need to do to rehabilitate themselves and resurrect the federal government. We need to re-establish a sense of priorities that the public will tolerate; we need to reform political institutions in a way that inspires confidence; we need to restore a moral component to the social safety net; we need to recommit ourselves to an enlightened nationalism. But none of these changes is more important than demonstrating our belief in limits. It is a precondition for all the rest.

Government, the great British economist Alfred Marshall wrote in 1919, "is the most precious of human possessions; and no care can be too great to be spent on enabling it to do its work in the best way; a chief condition to that end is that it should not be set to work for which it is not specially qualified, under the conditions of time and place." Liberals have followed their good intentions and resisted that lesson for decades. Sooner or later we are going to have to learn it. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Beliefs

Ken Loach, that invaluable Englishman who made *Riff-Raff* and *Raining Stones* and *Ladybird, Ladybird*, has perfected a style that might be called neo-realism updated. Loach is as concerned with the harshness of social reality and the tenderness under it as ever Rossellini and DeSica were, but he leavens the mix with more professional actors than the pure neo-realists used in their work. They wanted film to find the truth in "mere" people: Loach thinks that the right actors need not interfere with the search for truth—they can in fact illuminate it. He isn't therefore superior to his predecessors, but he certainly proves his right to his views.

His views make his latest, **Land and Freedom** (Gramercy), just as finely fashioned as the ones cited above. In texture and urgency it never wavers. But it does leave us wondering about its being as a whole. *Land and Freedom* is about the Spanish Civil War as seen by Dave Hart, an English working man and a communist, who volunteers to fight in Spain in 1936; but the film begins with his death in Liverpool today.

In Jim Allen's screenplay, Dave's granddaughter goes through his letters and clippings and photos, and the film flashes back to his experiences in Spain: his combat life, his encounters with the communist factionalism that accompanies the fight against fascism, his involvement in the ponderous discussion groups, his love affair with a young woman in the ranks alongside him and the dreadful inevitable results of the war—inevitable not only because Italy and Germany were supporting Franco, not only because the democracies were reluctant to support communists, but because of the strife among anti-Franco forces and the subversions of Stalin.

For those of us who lived through those days, Loach recreates engulfingly the atmosphere in which we lived and feared. Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 had been naked brutality. Still, it seemed somewhat distant. Franco's rebellion in Spain seemed to presage the tidal roll of fascism toward us. Loach made me remember nightmares (and my two heroic days when I got an application form for the Abraham Lincoln Battalion and studied it, then never filled it out).

World War II and subsequent events erased that simplicity—but apparently not for Loach. As Dave Hart's body is lowered into his Liverpool grave, his relatives and friends, young and old, raise their fists in the communist salute. It's not knee-jerk anti-communism, I think, to wonder—after that salute—about the purpose of the film. Is Loach sympathizing or satirizing? Is he telling us that Dave—and perhaps he himself—learned nothing from the slitherings of communist policy in the Spanish Civil War, let alone the cascade of subsequent history? In recent years, even deeply held radical beliefs have come in for darker tempering; we get no sense of that from Loach's excellently made but ideationally puzzling film.

The Celluloid Closet (Sony Classics) is primarily an exposé. Basing it on the book of the same title by the late Vito Russo, Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman have made a documentary—with numerous clips from fiction films and with interspersed comments from film figures—that traces the history of homosexuality in films. It's interesting to see how gay and lesbian themes began to be treated openly in films, but it's fascinating to see how—earlier—those themes were used subtextually in films that make no overt reference to the real subject.

One of the many commentators, Gore Vidal, who worked on the 1959 *Ben Hur*, explains how gay feeling was managed in a scene between Charlton Heston and Stephen Boyd, a reunion of two old friends. Vidal says that Boyd was advised to play the scene as though he and Heston had once been lovers, but Vidal warned the director that Heston would be shocked at such direction and should just play it macho. With this gloss, the scene becomes subliminally quite funny.

Arthur Laurents, who wrote the screenplay of Hitchcock's *Rope*, tells us that he conceived it as a story about two homicidal thrill-seeking gay young men; and the clip we see fulfills this idea, though nothing about it is uttered. Laurents also comments on a scene in Hawk's robustious *Red River* in which Montgomery Clift and John Ireland compare pistols. Though Clift was widely known to be gay, the scene was not as risible then as Laurents's comment makes it now.

"Risible" is true but not enough. It and similar material make us laugh, but it's also embittering. One gay commentator says that in those days he and his friends went to films with some hope of seeing

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Anne Frank Remembered. *More about the story than we knew there was to know. A documentary vivified by fascinating interviews with survivors. (Reviewed 3/4/96)* **Heidi Fleiss: Hollywood Madam.** *Nick Broomfield's documentary, made for the BBC, presents the steamy underside of Lotusland, with a psychologically bent central figure. (3/11/96)* **Lamerica.** *Subtly powerful story of a young Italian con man and an 80-year-old former political prisoner in post-communist Albania. Trenchantly directed by the man who made "Stolen Children," Gianni Amelio. (1/29/96)* **Up Close and Personal.** *Agreeable fluff pretending to be serious. About the TV news game. With two Beautiful People, Robert Redford and Michelle Pfeiffer. (3/25/96)*—**SK**

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their lives reflected on the screen, but except for derogatory remarks and caricatures, the subject never arose.

Then, in the 1960s, homosexuality began to be an explicit, serious subject. Dirk Bogarde in *Victim* (1961) is cited as the first star to play a homosexual, but his character appears to the world as straight. This documentary slights the first major film about overtly gay men—*Staircase* (1969), directed by Stanley Donen, with Richard Burton and Rex Harrison as two aging gay lovers who have long lived together. Harrison swishes around, but Burton plays humanely, compassionately. The picture is not as good as the original play, which I saw in London, but it was nonetheless a risk courageously taken.

This relatively new, hard-won honesty leads, alas, to **The Birdcage** (United Artists). This is an American adaptation of *La Cage Aux Folles*, which began as a Paris play, became an amusing French film (with two sequels that I missed), and was then converted into a Broadway musical, which retained the French setting. That musical had a good score, but the basic joke—and basically there's only one—was elongated. Elaine May's screen adaptation stretches it even further.

The setting is moved from St. Tropez to a Florida beach resort. Robin Williams and Nathan Lane are longtime lovers who live above a drag club (called The Birdcage) that Williams manages and where Lane is the drag star. Williams's son, the result of a youthful escapade, arrives to tell dad that he is about to marry the daughter of a rightist senator, that Mr. and Mrs. Senator are coming to dinner, and dad's homosexuality must be concealed. How to get away with the masquerade—that's the one joke.

I don't think that the joke palled for me just because it's my third time around. Williams, a truly funny performer, seems fettered. Lane, a self-enjoying actor, seems too unfettered. The supposedly funny incidents at the dinner—the clumsy servant who trips, the disastrous soup, etc., etc.—all seem stock-company lumber dragged out of the storeroom. The director, once a virtuoso of comic material, is Mike Nichols, here leaden and lazy. There's just one good touch: the film opens with a glide across the ocean, right up on to the beach and into the drag club, right up to the bar—all in one shot. A promising start, soon betrayed.

Well, why can't there be some dismal films about the gay scene? Heaven knows there have been thousands about hetero life. •

Satyajit Ray and the art of universalism.

Our Culture, Their Culture

BY AMARTYA SEN

The work of Satyajit Ray presents a remarkably insightful understanding of the relations between cultures, and his ideas remain pertinent to the great cultural debates in the contemporary world, not least in India. I would like to pursue these ideas. In Ray's films and in his writings, we find explorations of at least three general themes on cultures and their interrelations: the importance of distinctions between different local cultures and their respective individualities; the necessity of understanding the heterogeneous character of each local culture (even the culture of a community, not to mention a region or a country); and the great need for intercultural communication, attended by a recognition of the barriers that make intercultural communication a hard task.

A deep respect for distinctiveness is combined, in Ray's vision, with a recognition of internal diversity and an appreciation of the need for genuine communication. Impetuous cosmopolitans have something to learn from his focus on distinctiveness, but it is the growing army of communitarian and cultural "separatists"—increasingly more fashionable in India and elsewhere—that most needs to take note of the persistence of heterogeneity at the local level and the creative role of intercultural and intercommunal communication and learning.

In emphasizing the need to honor the individuality of each culture, Ray saw no reason for closing the doors to the outside world. Indeed, opening doors was an important priority of Ray's work. In this respect, Ray's attitude contrasts sharply with the increasing tendency to see Indian culture (or cultures) in highly conservative terms, to preserve it (or them) from the "pollution" of Western ideas and thought. He was always willing to enjoy and to learn from ideas, art forms, and styles of life from anywhere, in India or abroad.

Ray appreciated the importance of heterogeneity within local communities. This perception contrasts sharply with the tendency of many communitarians, religious and secular, who are willing to break up the nation into communities and then stop dead there: "thus far and no further." The great filmmaker's eagerness to seek the larger unit—to talk to the whole world—went well with his enthusiasm for understanding the smallest of the small—the individuality, ultimately, of each person. From such a vision, I believe, we have much to learn right now.

There can be little doubt about the importance that Ray attached to the distinctiveness of cultures. He also discussed the problems that these divisions create in the possibility of communication across cultural boundaries. In *Our Films, Their Films*, he noted the important fact that films acquire "colour from all manner of indigenous factors such as habits of speech and behaviour, deep-seated social practices, past traditions, present influences and so on." He went on to ask: "How much of this can a foreigner—with no more than a cursory knowledge of the factors involved—feel and respond to?" He observed also that "there are certain basic similarities in human behaviour all over the world" (such as "expressions of joy and sorrow, love and hate, anger, surprise and fear"), but "even they can exhibit minute local variations which can only puzzle and perturb—and consequently warp the judgment of—the uninitiated foreigner."

The presence of such cultural differences raises many interesting problems. The possibility of communication is only one of them. There is also the more basic issue of the individuality of each culture. How might this individuality be respected and valued, even as the world grows steadily smaller and more uniform? We live in a time in which many things are increasingly common, and the possibility that something important is being lost in this process of integration has aroused understandable concern.

The individuality of cultures is a big subject now, and the tendency towards

AMARTYA SEN is Lamont University Professor and professor of economics and philosophy at Harvard University. An earlier version of this essay was given as the Satyajit Ray Memorial Lecture in Calcutta in December.

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the homogenization of cultures, particularly in some uniformly Western mode, or in the deceptive form of "modernity," has been sharply challenged. Anxieties of this kind have been expressed in different forms in recent cultural studies, which flourish today in Western literary and intellectual circles. There is an irony, perhaps, in the fact that so much of the critique of "Western modernity" has come straight from the West to the Third World; but these questions are being plentifully asked in contemporary India as well. Engaging arguments in this direction have been presented by, among others, Partha Chatterjee, in *The Nation and Its Fragments* (1993) and elsewhere, and in the literary, sociological and anthropological writings of such diverse and forceful authors as Ashis Nandy, Homi K. Bhaba and Veena Das, to name a few. These approaches share, to varying extents, a well-articulated "anti-modernism," rejecting, in particular, "Western" forms of modernization, which Chatterjee contrasts with the preferred form of what he calls "our modernity." Sometimes the defiance of Western cultural modes is expressed in India through enunciations of the unique importance of Indian culture and the traditions of its communities.

Courtesy Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive

SATYAJIT RAY, *APARAJITO*, 1956

At the broader level of "Asia" rather than India, the separateness of "Asian values," and their distinction from Western norms, has often been asserted, particularly in east Asia, from Singapore and Malaysia to China and Japan. The invoking of Asian values has sometimes occurred in rather dubious political circumstances. It has been used to justify authoritarianism (and harsh penalties for alleged transgressions) in some east Asian countries. In 1993, at the Vienna conference on human rights, the foreign minister of Singapore, along with the Chinese Foreign Minister, cited the differences between Asian and European traditions and argued that "universal recognition of the ideal of human rights can be harmful if universalism is used to deny or mask the reality of diversity." The championing of "Asian values" has typically come from governmental spokesmen and not from individuals opposed to the established regimes. Still, the general issue is important enough to deserve our attention; and so, in examining the implications of cultural diversity, I must also take up this question.

Even though he emphasized the difficulties of intercultural communication, Ray did not take cross-cultural comprehension to be impossible. He saw the difficulties as challenges to be surmounted rather than as strict boundaries that could not be breached. He did not propound a thesis of "incommunicability" across cultural boundaries; he argued instead that we need to recognize the difficulties that may arise. And on the larger subject of preserving traditions against foreign influence, Ray was not a cultural conservative. He did not give systematic priority to inherited practices.

I find no evidence in Ray's films or in his writings that the fear of being too influenced by outsiders disturbed his equilibrium as an "Indian" artist. He wanted to take full note of the importance of a particular cultural background without denying what there is to learn from elsewhere. There is much wisdom, I think, in this "critical openness," including the prizing of a dynamic, adaptable world over a world that is constantly "policing" external influences and fearing "invasion" of ideas from elsewhere.

The difficulties of understanding each other across the boundaries of culture are undoubtedly great. This applies to the cinema, but also to other art forms, especially literature. The inability of most foreigners, even of other Indians, to grasp the beauty of Rabindranath Tagore's poetry (a failure that we Bengalis find so exasperating) is a good illustration of this problem. Indeed, the thought that these non-appreciating others are being willfully contrary and obdurate (rather than being thwarted by the barriers of languages and translations) is a frequently aired suspicion.

The problem is perhaps less extreme in films, insofar as film is less dependent on language. People can be informed by gestures and actions. Still, our day-to-day experiences generate certain patterns of reaction and non-reaction that can be mystifying for foreign viewers who have not had those experiences. The gestures—and the non-gestures—that are quite standard, and "perfectly ordinary," in India may appear altogether remarkable when they are seen by others. Also, words have a function that goes well beyond the information that they directly convey. Much is communicated by the sound of the language, and the special choice of words conveys a particular meaning or creates a particular effect. As Ray observed, "in a sound film, words are expected to perform not only a narrative but a plastic function," and "much will be missed unless one knows the language, and knows it well."

Even the narrative may be inescapably transformed by language barriers, owing to nuances that are missed in translations. I was reminded of Ray's remark the other day when I saw *Tin Kanya* again, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at a recent festival of Ray's films (in their wonderful reissues by Merchant-Ivory). When the obdurate Paglee at last decides to write a letter to her spurned husband, she conveys her new sense of intimacy by addressing him with the familiar form *tumi*, rather than the formal *apni*. This could not be caught in the English subtitle. The translation had to show her sign the letter as "your wife," to convey this new sense of intimacy; but the Bengali original form in which she signs as "Paglee" but addresses him as *tumi*, is infinitely more subtle.

Such difficulties cannot be altogether escaped. Ray did not design his movies for a foreign audience, and the Ray fans abroad who rush to see his films know that they are, in a sense, eavesdropping. This relationship between the artist and the eavesdropper is by now very well established among the millions of Ray's admirers around the world. There is no expectation that his films are anything other than those of an Indian director—and a Bengali director—made for a local audience, and the attempt to see what is

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going on in these films is a decision to engage in a self-consciously "receptive" activity.

In this sense, Ray has triumphed—and on his own terms. This vindication of his belief that he will be understood, all the barriers notwithstanding, tells us something about the possibility of understanding across cultural boundaries. It may be hard, but it can be done; and the eagerness with which viewers with much experience of Western cinema flock to see Ray's films (despite the occasional obscurities of a presentation tailored to an entirely different audience) indicates what may be accomplished when there is a willingness to go beyond the bounds of one's own culture.

Satyajit Ray makes an important distinction between what is or is not sensible when one tries to speak across a cultural divide, especially across the divide between the West and India. In 1958, two years after *Pather Panchali* won the Special Award in Cannes, and one year after he won the Grand Prix at Venice for *Aparajito*, Ray wrote the following, in an essay called "Problems of a Bengali Film Maker":

> There is no reason why we should not cash in on the foreigners' curiosity about the Orient. But this must not mean pandering to their love of the false-exotic. A great many notions about our country and our people have to be dispelled, even though it may be easier and—from a film point of view—more paying to sustain the existing myths than to demolish them.

Ray was not alone, of course, in pursuing such an approach. There have been several other eminent directors from India who have essentially followed the same route as Ray. As an old resident of Calcutta, I am proud of the fact that some of the particularly distinguished ones have come—like Ray—from this very city. (I think of Mrinal Sen, Ritwik Ghatak, Aparna Sen and others.) But what Ray calls pandering to the "love of the false-exotic" has clearly tempted many other directors. Many Indian films that can fairly be called "entertainment movies" have achieved great success abroad, including in the Middle East and Africa, and Bombay has been a big influence on the cinematic world in many countries.

It is not obvious whether the imaginary scenes of archaic splendor shown in such "entertainment movies" should be seen as mis-descriptions of the India in which they are allegedly set or as an excellent portrayal of some non-existent "never-never land" that is not to be confused with any real country. As Ray notes in another context, quite a few of these traditional Indian films, which attract large audiences, "do away wholly with [the] bothersome aspect of social identification" and "present a synthetic, non-existent society, and one can speak of credibility only within the norms of this make-belief world." Ray suggests that this feature "accounts for their country-wide acceptance." This is true; but this quality of make-believe also contributes greatly to the appeal of these films to some foreign audiences, which are happy to see lavish entertainment in an imagined land. This is an easily understandable "success" story: acceptance abroad brings both reputation and revenue. (In contemporary India, where "export promotion" is becoming a supreme value, who can deny such an achievement?)

In fact, the exploitation of the biases and the vulnerabilities of the foreign audience need not be concerned specifically with the "love of the false-exotic." Exploitation can take other forms—not necessarily false, nor especially exotic. There is nothing false about Indian poverty, nor about the fact—remarkable to others—that Indians have learned to live normal lives in the midst of this poverty, taking little notice of the surrounding misery.

The graphic portrayal of extreme wretchedness, and of heartlessness

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towards the downtrodden, can itself be exploited, especially when supplemented by a goodly supply of vicious villains. At a sophisticated level, such exploitation can be seen even in *Salaam Bombay!*, the wonderfully successful film by Meera Nair. Nair's film is powerfully constructed and deeply moving; and yet it mercilessly exploits not only the viewer's sympathy and sentimentality, but also her interest in identifying "the villain of the piece" who might be blamed for all this suffering.

Since *Salaam Bombay!* is full of villains, and of people totally lacking in sympathy and any sense of justice, the causes of the suffering portrayed in the film begin to look easily comprehensible even to distant foreigners. Given the lack of humanity around these Indian victims, what else can you expect? Nair's kind of exploitation draws simultaneously on the common knowledge that India has much suffering and on the common comfort—for which there is a demand—in seeing the faces of the "baddies" who are causing all this trouble, as in, say, American gangster movies. (This easy reliance on villains is less present in Nair's subsequent film, *Mississippi Masala*, which raises some important and interesting issues of identity involving ex-Ugandans of Indian origin in the United States.) At a more mundane level, *City of Joy* does the same with Calcutta, with clearly identified villains who have to be confronted.

By contrast, even when Ray's films deal with problems that are just as intense (such as the coming of the Bengal famine in *Ashani Sanket*), the comfort of a ready explanation through the presence of villains is avoided. In Ray's films, villains are remarkably rare, almost absent. When terrible things happen, there may be nobody clearly responsible. And even when someone is clearly responsible, as Dayamoyee's father-in-law most definitely is responsible for her predicament, and ultimately for her suicide, in *Devi*, he, too, is a victim, and by no means devoid of humane features. If *Salaam Bombay!* and *City of Joy* ultimately belong in the "cops and robbers" tradition (except that there are no "good cops" in *Salaam Bombay!*), the Ray films which portray tragedies have neither cops nor robbers. Ray chooses to convey something of the complexity of social situations that makes such tragedies hard to avoid, rather than to supply easy explanations in the greed, the cupidity and the cruelty of "bad" people.

While Satyajit Ray insists on retaining the real cultural features of the society that he portrays, his view of India—even his view of Bengal—recognizes a complex reality, with immense heterogeneity at every level. It is not the picture of a stylized East meeting a stereotypical West, which has been the stock-in-trade of so many recent writings critical of "Westernization" and "modernity." Ray emphasized that the people who "inhabit" his films are complicated and extremely diverse:

> Take a single province: Bengal. Or, better still, take the city of Calcutta where I live and work. Accents here vary between one neighbourhood and another. Every educated Bengali peppers his native speech with a sprinkling of English words and phrases. Dress is not standardized. Although women generally prefer the sari, men wear clothes which reflect the style of the thirteenth century or conform to the directives of the latest *Esquire*. The contrast between the rich and the poor is proverbial. Teenagers do the twist and drink Coke, while the devout Brahmin takes a dip in the Ganges and chants his *mantras* to the rising sun.

It is important to note that the native culture which Ray stresses is not some pure vision of a tradition-bound society, but the heterogeneous lives and commitments of contemporary India. The Indian who does the twist is as much there as the one who chants his *mantras* by the Ganges.

The recognition of this heterogeneity makes it immediately clear why Ray's focus on local culture cannot be readily seen as an "anti-modern" move. "Our culture" can draw on "their culture" and "their culture" can draw on "our culture." The emphasis on the culture of the people who inhabit Ray's films is in no way a denial of the legitimacy of the interest in things originating elsewhere. Indeed, Ray recollects with evident joy the time when Calcutta was full of Western (including American) troops, in the winter of 1942:

> Calcutta now being a base of operations of the war, Chowringhee was chock-a-block with GIs. The pavement book stalls displayed wafer-thin editions of *Life* and *Time*, and the jam-packed cinema showed the very latest films from Hollywood. While I sat at my office desk . . . my mind buzzed with the thoughts of the films I had been seeing. I never ceased to regret that while I had stood in the scorching summer sun in the wilds of Santiniketan sketching *simul* and *palash* in full bloom, *Citizen Kane* had come and gone, playing for just three days in the newest and biggest cinema in Calcutta.

This interest in things from elsewhere had begun a lot earlier. Ray's engagement with Western classical music goes back to his youth, and his fascination with films preceded his involvement with music. In his posthumously published book, *My Years with Apu: A Memoir*, Ray recollects:

> I became a film fan while still at school. I avidly read *Picturegoer* and *Photoplay*, neglected my studies and gorged myself on Hollywood gossip purveyed by Hedda Hopper and Louella Parsons. Deanna Durbin became a favourite not only because of her looks and her obvious gifts as an actress, but because of her lovely soprano voice. Also firm favourites were Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, all of whose films I saw several times just to learn the Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern tunes by heart.

Ray's willingness to enjoy and to learn from things happening elsewhere—in India or abroad—is plentifully clear in how he chose to live and what he chose to do. (In addition to Ray's own autobiographical accounts in *Our Films, Their Films* and *My Years with Apu: A Memoir*, his involvements in ideas and arts from elsewhere are discussed in some detail in Andrew Robinson's *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*, which appeared in 1989.) When Ray describes what he learned as a student at Santiniketan, where he studied fine arts at Tagore's distinguished center of education, the elements from home and abroad are well mixed together. He learned a great deal about India's "artistic and musical heritage" (he got involved in Indian classical music, aside from being trained to paint in traditional Indian ways) and "far-eastern calligraphy" (particularly the use of "minimum brush strokes applied with maximum discipline"). When his teacher, Nandalal Bose, a great artist and the leading light of the Bengal school, taught Ray to draw a tree ("Not from the top downwards. A tree grows up, not down. The strokes must be from the base upwards . . ."), Bose was being critical of some Western conventions and introducing Ray to the styles and the traditions of China and Japan. (They got the tree right, Bose had decided.)

Ray does not hesitate to indicate how strongly *Pather Panchali*—the profound film that immediately made him a filmmaker of international distinction—was influenced by Vittorio De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief*. He saw *The Bicycle Thief* within three days of arriving in London for a brief stay, and noted: "I knew immediately that if I ever made *Pather Panchali*—and the idea had been at the back of my mind for some time—I would make it in the same way, using natural locations and unknown actors." Despite this influence, *Pather Panchali*, of course, is a quintessentially Indian film, in subject matter and in style, and yet a major inspiration

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for it came from an Italian film. The Italian influence did not make *Pather Panchali* anything other than an Indian film; it simply helped to make it a *great* Indian film.

The growing tendency in contemporary India to champion the need for an indigenous culture that has "resisted" external influences and borrowings lacks credibility as well as cogency. It has become quite common to cite the foreign origin of an idea or a tradition as an argument against its use, and this has been linked to an antimodernist priority. Thus, even a social analyst as acute as Partha Chatterjee finds it possible to dismiss Benedict Anderson's thesis linking nationalism and "imagined communities" by referring to the Western origin of that "modular" form:

> I have one central objection to Anderson's argument. If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain "modular" forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine?

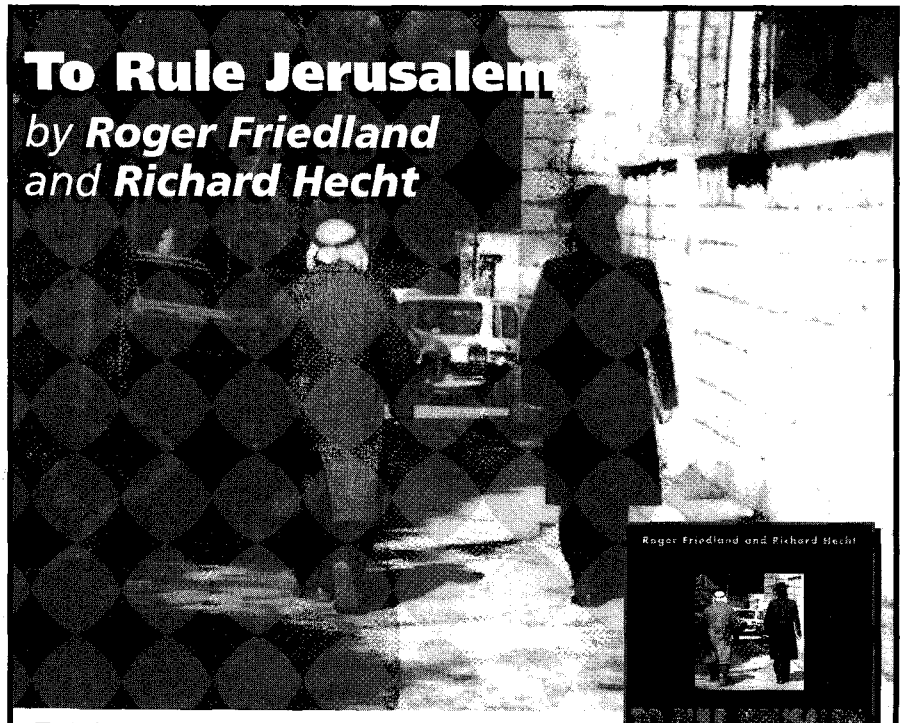
Anderson's concept of "the nation as an imagined community" may or may not have much to commend it (I think that it does); but the fear that its Western origin would leave us without a model that is our "own" is a rather peculiar concern.

Indian culture, as it has evolved, has always been prepared to absorb materials and ideas from elsewhere. Satyajit Ray's heterodoxy is not out of line with our tradition. Even in matters of day-to-day living: the fact that the chili, a basic ingredient of traditional Indian cooking, was brought to India by the Portuguese from the "New World" does not make Indian cooking any less Indian. Indeed, chili has now become an "Indian" spice. Of course, cultural influences are a two-way process: India may have acquired the chili from abroad, but we have also given the world the benefits of our culinary traditions. While tandoori came from the Middle East to India, it is in its Indian form that tandoori has become a staple British diet. In London last summer I heard something described as being "as English as daffodils or chicken tikka masala."

The mixture of traditions that underlie the major intellectual developments in the world dictates strongly against taking a "national" (or "regional" or "local" or "community-based") view of these developments. The role of mixed heritage in a subject such as mathematics, for example, is well-known. The interlinkage between Indian, Arabic and European mathematics has been particularly significant in the development of what is now called Western mathematics. These connections are beautifully illustrated by the origin of the term "sine" in Western trigonometry.

That modern term came to India through the British, and yet in its genesis there is a remarkable Indian component. Aryabhata, an Indian mathematician and astronomer who lived in the fifth and early sixth centuries, discussed the concept of "sine," and called it *jya-ardha*, or "half-chord," in Sanskrit. From there the term migrated in an interesting way, as Howard Eves describes in *An Introduction to the History of Mathematics*:

> Aryabhata called it *ardha-jya* ("half-chord") and *jya-ardha* ("chord-half"), and then abbreviated the term by simply using *jya* ("chord"). From *jya* the Arabs phonetically derived *jiba*, which, following Arabic practice of omitting vowels, was written as *jb*. Now *jiba*, aside from its technical significance, is a meaningless word in Arabic. Later writers who came across *jb* as an abbreviation for the meaningless word *jiba* substituted *jaib* instead, which contains the same letters, and is a good Arabic word meaning "cove" or "bay." Still later, Gherardo of Cremona (ca. 1150), when he made his translations from the Arabic, replaced the Arabian *jaib* by its Latin equivalent, *sinus* [meaning a cove or a bay], from whence came our present word *sine*.



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Given the cultural and intellectual interconnections, the question of what is "Western" and what is "Eastern" (or "Indian") is often hard to decide, and the issue can be discussed only in dialectical terms. The characterization of an idea as "purely Western" or "purely Indian" can be very illusory. The origin of ideas is not the kind of thing to which "purity" happens easily.

This issue has some practical importance now, given the political developments of the last decade, including the increase in the strength of political parties focusing on the Indian—particularly the Hindu—heritage. There is an important aspect of anti-modernism, which tends to question, explicitly or implicitly, the emphasis to be placed on what is called "Western science." If the challenges from traditional conservatism grow, this can become quite a threat to scientific education in India, affecting what young Indians are encouraged to learn, and how much emphasis is put on science in the general curriculum.

The reasoning behind this "anti-foreign" attitude is flawed in several ways. First, so-called "Western science" is not the special possession of Europe and America. It is true that, since the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution, and the Enlightenment, most scientific progress has occurred in the West; but these scientific developments drew substantially on earlier work in mathematics and science done by the Arabs, the Chinese, the Indians, and others. The term "Western science" is misleading in this respect, and misguided in its tendency to establish a distance between non-Western people and the pursuit of mathematics and science. Second, irrespective of the location of the discoveries and the inventions, the methods of reasoning used in science and mathematics give them some independence of local geography and cultural history. To be sure, there are important issues of local knowledge, and of the varying perspectives regarding what is or is not important; but there is still much of substance that is shared in methods of argument, demonstration, and the scrutiny of evidence. The term "Western science" is misleading in this respect, too.

Third, our decisions about the future need not be parasitic on the past we have experienced. Even if there were no Asian or Indian component in the evolution of contemporary mathematics and science—this is not the case, but even if it were the case—their importance in contemporary India need not be deeply undermined for that reason. Rabindranath Tagore nicely illustrated the tyranny of being bound to the past in his amusing but profoundly serious short story "Kartar Bhoot" ("The Ghost of the Leader"), in which the wishes of the respected but dead leader make the lives of others impossibly constrained.

There is a similar issue, to which I referred earlier, about the role of "modernity" in contemporary India. The recent attacks on modernity (especially on a "modernity" that is seen as coming to India from the West) draw greatly on the literature of "post-modernism" and on similar approaches that have been quite influential in Western literary and cultural circles, and in India, too. There is something interesting in this dual role of the West, the colonial metropolis supplying ideas to post-colonial intellectuals to attack the influence of the colonial metropolis; but there is no contradiction here. This dual role does suggest, however, that the mere identification of the Western connections of an idea cannot be enough to damn it. The critics of "modernism" often share with the advocates of "modernism" the belief that being "modern" is a well-defined concept—they are for "it" and we are against "it." But this type of identification is not at all easy, given the historical roots—the long and tangled roots—of recent intellectual developments, and given the mixture of origins in the genesis of the ideas and the methods that are typically taken to characterize modernism.

The point is not that all modern things are good, or that there are no reasons to doubt the wisdom of many developments that are justified in the name of modernity. Rather, the point is that there is no escape from the critical scrutiny of ideas, norms and proposals, no matter whether they are seen as pro-modern or anti-modern. When we come to decide what policies to support in education, health care, or social security, the modernity or the non-modernity of a proposal is neither here nor there. The relevant question is how these policies would actually affect the lives of people. Similarly, when faced with communal tensions in contemporary India, there is much to be gained from reading the tolerant poems of Kabir, or studying the political priorities of Akbar, in contrast with, say, the intolerant approach of Aurangzeb. The discrimination among ideas must be made in terms of their worth, not on the basis of some claim that Kabir or Akbar was "more modern" or "less modern" than Aurangzeb. Modernity is not only a bewildering notion, it is also largely irrelevant as a measure of merit or demerit in assessing contemporary priorities.

What about the specialness of "Asian values," about which so much is now being said by the authorities in a number of east Asian countries? These arguments, used in Singapore and China, appeal to the differences between "Asian values" and "Western values" to dispute the importance of human rights and press freedoms in Asian countries. The resistance to Western hegemony—a perfectly respectable cause in itself—takes the form, under this interpretation, of justifying the suppression of journalistic freedoms and the violations of elementary political and civil rights on the grounds of the alleged unimportance of these freedoms in the hierarchy of what are claimed to be "Asian values."

There are two problems with this mode of reasoning. First, even if it were shown that freedoms of this kind have had less importance in Asian thought and tradition than in the West, this would still be an unconvincing way of justifying the violation of these freedoms in Asia. To see the conflict over human rights as a battle between Western liberalism and Asian authenticity is to cast the debate in a form that distracts attention from the central question: What is right, what makes sense, in contemporary Asia? The history of ideas, in Asia and in the West, cannot decide this issue.

Second, it is by no means clear that historically there has been systematically greater importance attached to freedom and tolerance in the West than in Asia. Individual liberty, in its contemporary form, is a relatively new notion both in Asia and in the West; and while the West did get to these ideas earlier (through developments such as the Renaissance, the European Enlightenment the Industrial Revolution, and so on), the divergence between the cultures is relatively recent. In answer to the question, "at what date, in what circumstances, the notion of individual liberty ... first became explicit in the West," Isaiah Berlin has remarked that "I have found no convincing evidence of any clear formulation of it in the ancient world."

This view has been disputed by Orlando Patterson in *Freedom, Volume I: Freedom in the Making of Western Culture.* His historical arguments are interesting and forceful; but his thesis of a freedom-centered tradition in the West in contrast with what happened elsewhere seems to depend on attaching significance to particular elements of Western thought without looking adequately for comparable elements in non-Western intellectual traditions—for example, in the fairly extensive literatures on politics and governance in Sanskrit, Pali, Chi-

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nese, Arabic and other languages.

In the reading of the Western tradition that sees it as the natural habitat of individual freedom and political democracy, there is a tendency to extrapolate backwards from the present. Values that the European enlightenment and other relatively recent developments have made common and widespread can scarcely be seen as part of the long-run Western heritage, as if they were experienced in the West over millennia. In specific contexts in the Western classical tradition, of course, there have been championings of freedom and tolerance, but much the same can be said of many parts of the Asian tradition as well—not least in India, with the articulations associated with Ashoka's inscriptions, Shudraka's drama, Akbar's pronouncements, or Kabir's poetry, to name just a few examples.

It is true that tolerance has not been advocated by all in the Asian traditions. Nor has that tolerance typically covered everyone (though some, such as Ashoka, in the third century BC, did insist on completely universal tolerance, without any exception). But much the same can be said about Western traditions as well. There is little evidence that Plato or Augustine were more tolerant or less authoritarian than Confucius. Aristotle certainly did write on the importance of freedom, but women and slaves were excluded from the domain of his concern. The allegedly sharp contrast between Western and Asian traditions on the subject of freedom and tolerance is based on very poor history. And the authoritarian argument based on the special nature of Asian values is particularly dubious. Further, even if it were the case that "Asian values" are more authoritarian, this would not have been grounds enough to reject tolerance and liberties in contemporary Asia.

The debate about "Asian values" draws attention to an important issue underlying attempts at generalizations about East and West, about Europe and India, and so on. There are many sharp contrasts between Europe and India, but there are many sharp contrasts within India itself. And there are great differences between various parts of Indian intellectual and historical traditions. One of the things that goes deeply wrong with grand contrasts between "our culture" and "their culture" is the neglect of the tremendous variety *within* each of these cultures. Joan Robinson, the Cambridge economist, used to say that whatever you can rightly say about India, the opposite is also true. It is not that cultural differences are of no importance; but the contrasts do not come in

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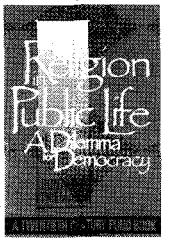

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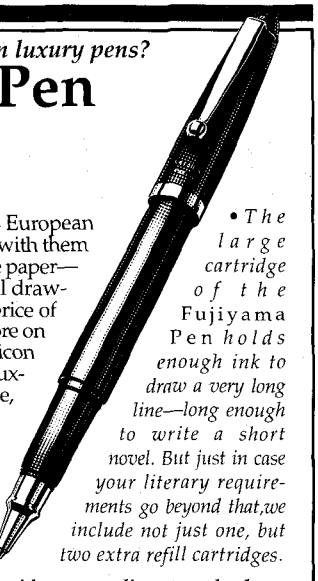

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the tailor-made form of some immense opposition between, say, the West and India, with relative homogeneity inside each.

The problem is even greater, of course, when there are attempts at generalizations about "Asian values." Asia is where about 60 percent of the world's entire population live. There are no quintessential values that apply to this immensely large and heterogeneous population, which separate them out as a group from the rest of the world. Those who have written on the importance of cultural divisions have been right to point to them, and yet the attempt to see these divisions in the over-aggregated form of a dichotomy between East and West conceals more than it reveals.

Indeed, even generalizations about a single religious community within India (the Hindus or the Muslims), or about a single language group (the Bengalis or the Punjabis or the Tamils), can be deeply misleading. Depending on the context, there may be more significant similarity between groups of people in different parts of the country who come from the same class, have the same political convictions, or pursue the same profession or work, and that similarity can hold across national boundaries as well. People can be classified in terms of many different criteria, and the recent tendency to emphasize some contrasts (religion or community) while ignoring others has overlooked important differences even as it has capitalized on others.

The difficulties of communication across cultures are real, as are the normative issues raised by the importance of cultural differences; but these difficulties do not require us to accept the standard divisions between "our culture" and "their culture." Nor do they give us reason to overlook the demands of practical reason, and of political and social relevance, in favor of faithfulness to some alleged historical contrasts. Which brings us back to Satyajit Ray. His delicate portrayal of the very different types that make us what we are cannot be matched.

Reflecting on what to include in his films, he posed the problem beautifully:

> What should you put in your films? What can you leave out? Would you leave the city behind and go to the village where cows graze in the endless fields and the shepherd plays the flute? You can make a film here that would be pure and fresh and have the delicate rhythm of a boatman's song. Or would you rather go back in time—way back to the Epics, where the gods and the demons took sides in the great battle where brother killed brother and Lord Krishna revivified a desolate prince with the words of the *Gita*? One could do exciting things here, using the great mimetic tradition of the *Kathakali*, as the Japanese use their Noh and Kabuki. Or would you rather stay where you are, right in the present, in the heart of this monstrous, teeming, bewildering city, and try to orchestrate its dizzying contrasts of sight and sound and milieu?

The celebration of these differences—the "dizzying contrasts"—is far from what can be found in labored generalizations about the unique and fragile purity of "our culture," and in the vigorous pleas to keep "our culture," "our modernity," immune from "their culture," "their modernity." In our heterogeneity, and in our openness, lies our pride, not our disgrace. Satyajit Ray taught us this, and the lesson is profoundly important for India. And for Asia, and for the world. •

The twentieth-century saga of Manès Sperber.

A Hero of His Times

By Tony Judt

The conventional history of Europe in the twentieth century begins with the collapse of continental empires in the course of the First World War. From Lenin's revolution in 1917 there arose a vision that in time came to seem the only alternative to the descent into fascism of much of the civilized world. Following the heroic struggles of the Second World War and the defeat of fascism, the choice for thinking people seemed to lie between communism and liberal democracy; but the latter was polluted for many by its imperialist ambitions, by the self-serving character of its democratic proclamations. Only at the end of the century, in our own day, has communism, too, lost its last shreds of credibility, leaving the field to an uncertain liberalism shorn of confidence and purpose.

That is the history of our century, as it seemed, and seems, to many in its time; and only in retrospect, and slowly, have its deeper and more convoluted patterns and meanings been unraveled and acknowledged, by scholars and participants alike. But there is another history of our era, a "virtual history" of the twentieth century, and it is the story of those men and women who lived through the century and also saw through it, who understood its meaning as it unfolded. There were not many of them. They did not need to wait for 1945, or 1989, to know what had happened and what it had meant, to see beyond the illusions. For various reasons, they saw across the veil earlier. Most of them are now dead. Some of them died young, paying dearly for their disquieting perspicacity. A strikingly large number of these clear-sighted voyagers through the century were Jews, many from east-central Europe.

Manès Sperber was one of them. He is not very well known in the English-reading world; he wrote mainly in German, occasionally in French. His major work of fiction, *Like a Tear in the Ocean*, which appeared in 1949, is a very long, semi-autobiographical *roman à clef* and not widely read. Its subject matter is a little like that of the early novels of André Malraux: it dissects the thoughts and the actions of small groups of intellectuals, revolutionaries and conspirators adrift in the century. Unlike Malraux, however,

All Our Yesterdays
by Manès Sperber

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Sperber was never attracted to "historic personalities" of the left or the right. Indeed, the elegiac mood of his book, and its intellectual tone, is more reminiscent of Arthur Koestler in *Darkness at Noon* or Victor Serge in *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*, two other ex-communists obsessed with their former allegiance.

But Sperber was an influential man in his day. He was a member of that brilliant fellowship of exile in post-war Paris that included Czeslaw Milosz, Kot Jelenski, Ignazio Silone, Boris Souvarine,

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François Fejto and Arthur Koestler. From 1946 he held a strategic editorial position at Calmann-Levy, the French publishing house, where he published in French some of the most significant writing from German-speaking Central Europe. He was also, with Koestler, Raymond Aron, Michael Polanyi, Edward Shils and Stephen Spender, one of the animators of the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the 1950s. It has been suggested that he and Koestler drew on their Comintern experience at the Berlin meeting of 1950, when the official justification and description of the Congress for Cultural Freedom was being drawn up. While others discussed and argued interminably, Sperber and Koestler put forward a pre-prepared text and got it voted through. If so, this would make Sperber one of the founding fathers of cold war liberalism, which is a bit misleading, since he also remained a lifelong friend of the non-communist left. He even served with Raymond Aron and André Malraux, in 1945, in the latter's short-lived Ministry of Information, a "ministry of all the talents" intended to assist in the postwar recovery of French cultural and intellectual life; and he cowrote, with Koestler and Albert Camus, an influential pamphlet against the death penalty.

Sperber's memoirs, which were published in German in the 1970s and have now appeared in English, have little to say about all that. They take us from his birth in Austrian Galicia in 1905 to the end of the Second World War and his decision to settle in Paris, where he stayed until his death in 1984. Even for the period they cover, the memoirs are sketchy and selective. Sperber was an enthusiastic practitioner of Adlerian psychology between the wars, and wrote two books about its founder; but we learn little of this, and nothing at all of his reasons for breaking with Adler and his ideas. This is a pity, since Sperber was deeply and permanently influenced by Adler's categories: his book is full of sometimes heavy-handed psychological "insights," describing men whose lives were framed by a commitment to communism as "suffering from the superpersonal reference compulsion," digressing into a clinical consideration upon "disactualized memory," and so on. Sperber even admits to some community of ideas with Wilhelm Reich (another Galician Jew who went to Berlin by way of Vienna); and he concedes that the rabbinical emphasis upon interpretation makes psychology a Jewish science par excellence.

The memoirs suffer a little, too, from Sperber's need to write them from memory. His early life, as we shall see, hardly lent itself to the peaceful accumulation of a private archive. Sometimes, when at a loss, he recycles material from his novel as though it were a primary source—quoting Doino Faber, his fictional alter ego, as evidence for a contemporary event or attitude. But none of this matters once he gets down to his story, a narrative of the first half of his life told as a tale of five cities.

The first of those cities was Zablotow, an undistinguished shtetl in Galicia on the eastern edge of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Here Sperber, raised among impoverished *luftmenshn* who had no visible means of support and lived for the coming of the Messiah, learned to be a Jew. Not only did he study Hebrew and Jewish texts, but he imbibed also the historical essence of Jewish identity, becoming aware of Christian hostility by the time he was 4, partaking in and observing the rituals of remembrance and celebration that conflated past and present, distance and proximity. He learned the word *Yerushalayim*, or Jerusalem, before being told the name of his own village; and "I knew the name of Captain Dreyfus before I knew my own." The pogrom in Kishinev in 1903 and the pogrom in Blois in 1171 formed, from his earliest days, an undifferentiated element in his own sense of identity and vulnerability. A good student, Sperber was expected by his learned father and grandfather to follow in their ways.

The First World War tore up Sperber's world—quite literally, since the Austrian-Russian battles took place in the region of Zablotow—and deposited him, a solitary, frightened adolescent, already rootless, in Vienna. He stayed in Vienna for nine years, forging the love-hate relationship with the place that was so common in his generation. It was during this time that Sperber lost his faith, though not his sense of identity. Like many Jewish adolescents, then and since, he turned for a while to a radical left-wing Zionist movement, *Hashomer Hatzair*, or the Young Guard, as a sort of halfway house between Judaism and assimilation. In the process, he acquired that curious anti-conventional moral fervor borrowed by some of the Zionist youth movements from the pre-1914 German Wandervogel clubs, echoes of which, Sperber says, he never rid himself completely.

It was in Vienna that he discovered and embraced Alfred Adler and his ideas, but in other ways the Vienna years were for Sperber a time of frustration, a period of "antitheses," when he was caught between faith and skepticism, community and individual, bond and fracture. Like others, he blamed Vienna for these dilemmas, though he confesses to having embraced the place all the more with each disappointment. In contrast to the novelist Joseph Roth, another Galician Jew, Sperber kept his distance from Austria, the reality and the myth. Roth went further in his search for assimilation, attributing to the defunct monarchy a super-cosmopolitanism that would compensate for his own and others' lost Jewishness, making of Austria-Hungary a place for people without a place. As Roth would observe in *The Emperor's Tomb*, the true Austria was not the Austro-Germans in Graz or Salzburg; it was the Slavs, the Muslims and the Jews at the imperial peripheries: only they bore true allegiance to the crown. And he was right. For the shtetl Jews especially, as Sperber notes, the Emperor Franz Josef I meant more than he did for anyone else. He was the guarantor of their civil rights, their only shield against the coming of hatred and despotism. As Sperber's own father lamented in 1916, upon hearing of the old Emperor's death: "Austria has died with him. He was a good emperor for us. Now everything will be uncertain! It is a great misfortune for us Jews." It was.

Sperber's solution to Roth's dilem-

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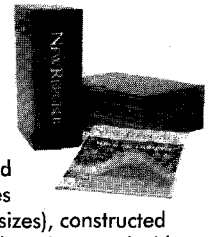

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ma was not to reinvent Vienna, but to leave it. In 1927 he went to Berlin, where he became a member of the German Communist Party. This was characteristic of many Eastern European Jewish radicals, who joined the party in the 1920s and left it in disgust a few years later (in contrast to Western European intellectuals, Jewish and non-Jewish, who joined later but stayed through the mid-1950s and beyond). Sperber did not so much abandon radical Zionism as transpose its goals. He overcame his feeling of failure at not joining the pioneers in Palestine by reasoning that the fate of Jews would be decided by the coming victory of socialism.

His descriptions of the years between his arrival in Berlin and the rise of Hitler are among the best in his memoirs, full of acute observation of the communist world and powerful first-person accounts of encounters with Nazis. Like Arthur Koestler, Hans Sahl and other contemporaries, Sperber was immunized against later ideological illusion by firsthand experience of the disastrous mistakes of the German Communists in the face of Nazism—although he also claims that observation of courageous, doomed German working-class demonstrators in January 1933, misled and then abandoned by their Party leaders, kept him committed to the cause of working people for the rest of his life, despite the glaring unreality of Communist paeans to proletarian strength and unity.

In 1933, at 28 already politically experienced and ideologically disabused, Sperber nearly took his insights with him to the grave. He was arrested and interrogated by the SS during a sweep in March, and spent some weeks in prison, a Jewish Communist awaiting either death or transfer to a camp. For reasons that he was unable to explain, he was instead released back into the streets of Berlin, whence he immediately escaped, after some adventures, to Paris. Here, as in Vienna and Berlin, he settled in and made a life for himself. Reflecting on his relationship to all these cities, he asks "Am I not like a fatherless child who says 'Papa' to every friendly man?"

His main contacts in Paris, a city full of émigrés and refugees from Nazism, were still the German-speaking Communists and ex-Communists. He would not formally leave the party until 1937, and much of the third volume of his memoirs is taken up with asking why he waited so long. "No man in his right mind," after all, could believe the Moscow Trials. According to Sperber, his doubts about the Radiant Future had begun as early as 1931, after a revealing journey to Moscow and subsequent insights into the daily life of "Socialist Man." His answer to his question is familiarly jesuitical (talmudic?). He felt entitled to remain silent, not for the sake of opportunism, but "if my contradiction was bound to be useless." Moreover, he did not want to know uncomfortable things, and thus managed to avoid them as long as possible: "I certainly did not want to be burdened with useless secrets, but beyond this I shrank from knowledge that would cause me both political and emotional difficulties."

In the '30s mood of anti-fascist unity this was enough to keep Sperber at odds with his own instincts for much of the decade. In his own memoirs, Hans Sahl, another German-speaking Jewish émigré, remembers Sperber, a little unflatteringly, as a man who at the time did not hesitate to "politically neutralize" critics of Stalin even among his own friends. The truth is probably that Sperber, like many others, was halfway out of communism when the rise of Hitler stopped him in his path, trapping him between his loathing for Nazism and his disillusion with communism, and pushing him into a silence that only a few (Arthur Koestler and Boris Souvarine were among them) had the moral courage to break.

Courtesy Holmes and Meier

MANÈS SPERBER, CAGNES SUR MER, CÔTE D'AZUR, 1942

In other respects, though, the early Paris years brought some relief. "The radical indifference of Parisians, and their decided disinclination to be drawn into the lives of foreigners or let such persons into their lives guarantees every individual a personal freedom that is hardly known elsewhere." By 1939, Sperber was ready to be alone, even lonely. His joining years were behind him, and his various identities had all been sloughed off. Psychology was set aside for a life of writing. With the outbreak of war, however, the French ceased to be indifferent to the foreigners in their midst (if they ever really were), and Sperber's progress out of his past was stopped dead in its tracks.

The fifth town in Sperber's European odyssey is one he never visited. By good fortune, he avoided falling into the hands of the Vichy police and so, unlike the majority of Central European Jewish refugees caught in France after the German victory, he was not interned for later dispatch to Auschwitz. But Auschwitz is the key to the rest of his life. It sets the tone for his recollection in tranquillity of all that went before.

Sperber divides human history into what came before the Shoah and what remains. Before 1933, and in some ways even until 1943 (when he first learned of the death camps), he had shared some of the illusions of his Marxist contemporaries: "Like almost all leftists, I was led astray by my belief that no matter what the Nazis professed and whatever promises they made as social demagogues, they would never act against the interests of capitalism and question its principle of the inviolability of private property." What the Nazis—and their collaborators in the Ukraine and in Croatia especially—subsequently did to Jews, "to my people," haunted him evermore, casting a film of pain across his memory.

When he returned to Germany and to Vienna after the war, nothing remained. It was as though all the links in the chain of his life had been snapped. The significance of this realization, for the reader of these memoirs, is considerable. The memoirs themselves do not directly discuss the impact of Auschwitz, which is the theme of a number of postwar essays by Sperber

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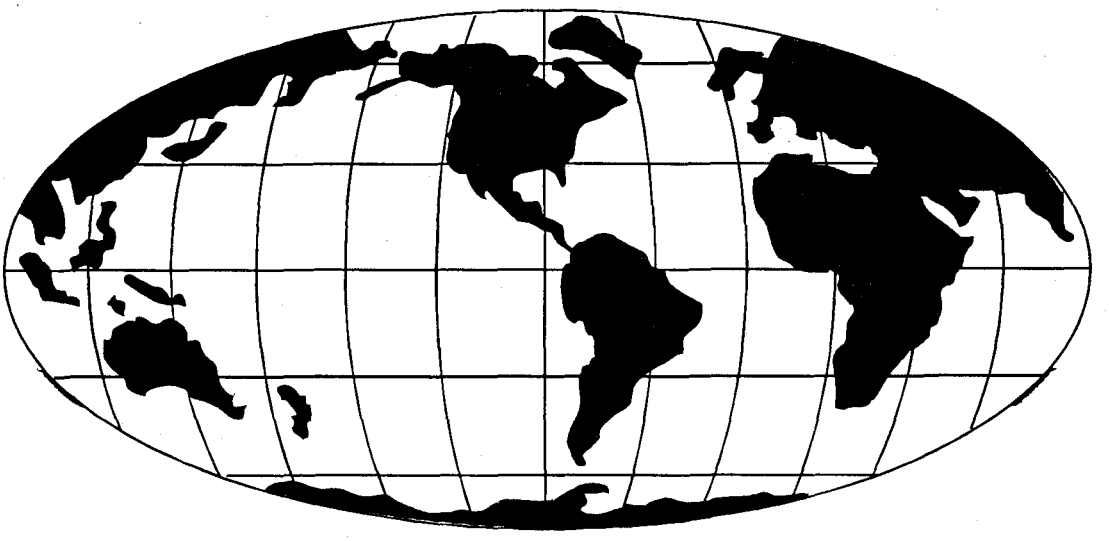

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collected in a volume called *Être Juif.* But if one reads Sperber's "recovered" awareness of Jewishness back into his story of the years 1905-1946, the narrative acquires a forceful new dimension. In what looks like just another exemplary twentieth-century European life, we find a distinctively Jewish story.

That story is told in a variety of keys. In the first place, Sperber's various institutional and ideological affiliations and defections conflate into a single, repeated experience: his loss of certainty at the moment of breaking with the religion of his forefathers. Thenceforth he is constantly tempted by "knowledge," only to shrink away from it, wary of its illusory quality, skeptical about its philosophical and historical adequacy. And always his father and grandfather are there at his shoulder—a reminder that if you must believe in just one truth, then let it be the first. There is an image somewhere in his novel of a rabbi's son hiding Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* inside a Hebrew Bible. It is an image that accounts for Sperber's own trajectory at more than one level.

As with the loss of faith, so with the decision to "engage." Sperber makes the point that secularized Jews readily transfer the religious imperative to make a better world—and the belief that this can be done, and therefore must be done—into some form of secular millenarianism. This is a rather familiar idea. But his more telling observation derives from his gloss on a comment made by Karl Kraus, that Jews in Western and Central Europe had, "in their unsuccessful flight from their Jewishness, sought a refuge in self-hatred." Sperber seems to have believed that whereas Western European Jews not only threw themselves into the secular fray as a substitute for faith, but also set aside the internal Jewish constraints upon extremism—the distaste for the inauthentic, the obsession with justice and so forth—it was his Eastern European Jewish roots that provided him with the anchor that kept him from drifting into revolutionary amoralism, opportunism and the like. This is hardly a testable proposition. Indeed, one could just as well reverse the theme, and understand Sperber's failure to criticize Stalin publicly as an echo of his ancestors' refusal to transgress their own taboos. What matters, however, is that this is how Sperber came to see the dilemmas of engagement and duty. We are very far from Sartre.

Sperber's emphasis upon specifically Jewish forms of engagement casts light upon another recurring theme in his writings, the theme of messianism. Sperber asks, "Why should a very young Jew from the Eastern Galician shtetl Zablotow have concerned himself with the struggle of the German proletariat?" Why, indeed. Well, like Leninism, Judaism has its intuitively absurd side: if it seems odd to claim that a tiny political fraction in Russia had the authority of history to speak for the workers of the world, how much odder to suppose that a universal God should have attached himself for eternity to one tiny itinerant people. The only thing that could possibly satisfy both claims was vindication in the future—world revolution in the one case, the coming of the Messiah in the other.

Sperber remarks upon this similarity, and admits that when he turned away from Judaism to Hegel and Marx, "I knew myself to be in the lineage of my messianic great-grandfather." But he goes further. There is also a difference between these worldviews, and the difference is this: the Messiah of his great-grandfather did not come (and therefore, one might add, was real); but Sperber's Messiah came, and proved false. In later essays Sperber wrote about Sabbatai Zevi, the false Messiah of the seventeenth century, and his misguided Jewish followers. This, surely, was no casual interest. Sperber and his fellow Communists, whether they knew it or not, sat squarely in a tradition of Jewish error. They were benighted adherents to false idols and mistaken messiahs, wanderers from the path of truth. In the end, he suggests, it is wiser to abandon all heartwarming certainties in favor of a lonely skepticism.

The pain of Auschwitz, for Sperber, had an extra sharpness owing to his relation to things German, especially the German language. American, British, French, Russian and Sephardic Jews cannot enter into this pain—which Sperber shared with Walter Benjamin, Stefan Zweig, Hannah Arendt and many others—because the love of German language and literature was a peculiarity of assimmilated or near-assimilated central-European Jews. What Sperber says of his own refusal to see all the way into Nazism, before and after Hitler's seizure of power, is true of many others: "I was resisting a break with Germany." Once the damage was done, however, these same German-speaking Jews had, for this very reason, a special understanding of the true havoc wreaked by Hitler—a deeper understanding, indeed, than many Germans themselves.

But Sperber was also a shtetl Jew from Galicia, unlike Arendt or Zweig. Thus he lived in many languages, growing up amid Hebrew, Yiddish, German, Polish and Ukrainian. He is insistent that the Jews of Eastern Europe, in contrast with their Western cousins, never lived in ghettos. They lived in towns of their own; they were not homeless, but rooted in an authentic autonomous culture of their own. Living athwart the frontier of Eastern European and Central European Jewry, Sperber understood the cosmopolitan centrality of Germanness but also the power—familial, linguistic, ceremonial—of an original, local culture. Writ larger, this meant that Sperber was in an unusually good position to understand the Europe of our time, past and present.

Whatever insights Jewishness affords into recent history, however, Jews were always marginal to that history. The specific forms of Jewish marginality—prejudice, exile, persecution—fit Jews well enough for twentieth-century life, just as the twentieth century could be made to fit all too easily into the shape of Jewish memory. As Sperber observes, he was taught to think of Egypt, Babylon, the Diaspora, the Crusades, the expulsion from Spain and the pogroms of the seventeenth-century Ukraine as a single moment in time, or rather out of time, a simultaneity of suffering which it was incumbent upon Jews to remember. When he left Zablotow, he thought to leave all that: "If Jewish shtetls still existed today they would belong, for me, only to a remote past." Owing to Hitler, however, Zablotow is joined to the present and to the past, and bound to the roll of horrors by Sperber's reawakened duty to bear witness.

It is this belated return to an abandoned ancestral duty—to the obligation to remember, drilled into him in early childhood in three languages: *Gedenk! Errinere dich! Tizkor!*—that drives Sperber, shapes his memoirs, justifies them; and it is this same particularism that lifts his memoirs, paradoxically, beyond their Jewish frame of reference. Sperber's achievement was partly the fulfillment of a personal responsibility—"we are become the walking cemeteries of our murdered friends"—but it was something more general, too. Like Koestler, Zweig and so many others, Sperber put his best work into his memoirs, offering testimony to a lost world: "I must speak of it as though I am the last to have known it. And in effect I am one of the last, one of the walking coffins of an exterminated world." The extermination of the past—by design, by neglect, by good

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intention—is what characterizes the history of our time. That is why the ahistorical memory of a marginal community that found itself in the whirlwind may yet be the best guide to our era. You don't have to be Jewish to understand the history of Europe in the twentieth century, but it helps.

TONY JUDT is Erich Maria Remarque Professor of European Studies at New York University.

Civil Service

BY MARY ANN GLENDON

Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy by Michael J. Sandel

(Harvard University Press, 417 pp., $24.95)

We are all civic republicans now. Or so it might seem, given the widespread absorption of the criticisms of liberalism launched by Michael Sandel and others in the 1970s. Who would have guessed then that Republican and Democratic candidates alike would be humming the same tunes of responsibility, virtue and character? That students of politics would be exploring the nooks and crannies of "civil society"? That lawyers and judges would be rediscovering a design for government as well as a charter of rights in the Constitution?

As these ideas have moved into mainstream American political discourse, the various criticisms of liberal theory are best understood as attacks on its excesses (social or economic libertarianism), or on the blind spots of its egalitarian-redistributionist strands. For none of the major players in the debate seriously contests the liberal project of government based on consent and limited by certain inalienable rights. Their main focus is rather on the scope of the democratic elements in our political arrangements, and on the hierarchy of rights. Whether rooted in classical, biblical, communitarian or civic republican perspectives, liberalism's gadflies come not to bury it, but to save it.

Sandel's latest contribution to this discussion, like his previous works, is notable for its seriousness, its intelligence and its illuminating excursions into constitutional law. The book begins with a reprise of his analysis of the theory of liberalism that until recently seemed dominant in the academy and the Supreme Court, if not in the larger society. That set of ideas found concrete expression in what Sandel calls the "procedural state," in which selected rights are treated as trumps, government is supposed to be neutral toward competing values, and human beings are envisioned as independent, freely choosing, self-constituting individuals. All those ideas, he contends, are deeply flawed. Giving highest priority to individual liberty to choose one's values for oneself neglects the freedom of citizens to shape the forces that govern their lives. The fiction of the freely choosing self fails to respect persons who are "encumbered by moral or civic obligations they have not chosen." As for neutrality, it is a lie, favoring hyper-liberal concepts of liberty over all rivals.

Building on these concepts, which will be familiar to readers of his earlier work, Sandel devotes the bulk of his new book to a demonstration that a more robust political vision has long played an important role in American political life. In constitutional law, for example, the traditional rationale for free speech connected it to effective participation in self-government and the pursuit of truth, rather than, as in recent years, self-expression. Where Sandel breaks new ground is in a series of chapters under the heading of "the political economy of citizenship." In these, he shows that the civic consequences of economic policy loomed large in political discourse from the years of the Founding through the early years of the labor movement and the Progressive era to the presidential campaign of Hubert Humphrey, who was one of the last defenders of local communities, family farms and small businesses against massive concentrations of political and economic power. It was only in the 1970s, according to Sandel, that public debate on the economy moved so decisively toward a preoccupation with how to promote growth and redistribution. He sees the Keynesian revolution as the economic counterpart of the rights revolution in constitutional law, the economic expression of the procedural republic.

The vitality of the "civic strand" in legal, political and economic thinking leads Sandel to believe that the republican vision remains a viable basis for a renewal of the democratic experiment. That vision, as he presents it, is at odds with several tenets of unreconstructed liberalism. Since the essence of freedom in the "civic republic" is participation in "a political community that controls its own fate," political power must be dispersed. And since self-government depends on informed deliberation among citizens who share a concern for the public good, the polity cannot be indifferent to the character and values of its citizens. Nor can it ignore the health of the communities of memory and mutual aid in which civic skills and virtues are acquired and nurtured.

Now that concerns about liberalism's extremes, the retrieval of its republican strand and the rediscovery of the intermediate institutions of civil society have been widely assimilated, we are back to the two questions that have dogged the American version of the democratic experiment from the beginning: Can there be a republic in an extended territory with a heterogeneous population? (The classical political philosophers doubted it.) Can good government be established by "reflection and choice" (as the authors of *The Federalist* wagered), or must our political fate be determined by "accident and force"?

A problem for champions of a republican vision is that many Americans seem to have silently given up on both propositions. After all, the demands of a republic on citizens and public servants are immensely difficult to meet. Self-government not only requires certain civic skills (deliberation, compromise, consensus-building, civility, reason-giving), but theaters in which those arts can be meaningfully exercised. A regime of ordered liberty demands certain character traits—self restraint, respect for others, public spiritedness and sturdy independence of mind. Our egalitarian and welfare aspirations require a modicum of fellow-feeling, as well as a certain disposition to assume responsibility for oneself and one's dependents.

But where do such qualities come from? That question has sent civic republicans and chastened liberals, those fraternal twins, back to Tocqueville. What other schools for citizenship or seedbeds of civic virtue are there besides families, educational institutions, neighborhoods, workers' associations,

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religious groups, town governments and the myriad other social subsystems that fill the space between individuals and the megastructures of state and market? Civil society, long neglected in political theory and practice, is back in vogue.

Unfortunately, the mediating structures of civil society are not in peak condition. Centralization of power has lessened opportunities for political participation; and changes in the economy have curtailed the ability of employees to have a say in the government of the workplace. The travail of groups such as families, neighborhoods and churches also reflects a deep ambivalence in the American soul. It is true that we're always forming associations, but we're always dissolving them, too: cashing out, moving on, starting over. The United States has long had the highest marriage rate in the Western world—and the highest divorce rate. A part of the challenge for civic republicans, as Michael Walzer once remarked, is that "there's nobody here but us Americans." Indeed, as innumerable national surveys show, we place an extraordinary value on several freedoms that are in tension with republican aspirations.

It was easy at first to shrug off the erosion of the republican elements in the polity, Sandel says, since most of it occurred in the postwar years when the economy was strong, the United States enjoyed primacy in the world, and a majority of citizens had realized the dream of home-ownership. It is only as we enter the season of what he calls "democracy's discontent" that the full extent of our disempowerment becomes apparent, and troubling. Americans, he says, are increasingly afflicted with the sense that "we are losing control of the forces that govern our lives" and that "the moral fabric of community is unraveling around us." That diagnosis seems to be widely shared. When Robert Reich speaks of "a profound sense that economic forces are out of control—that neither hard work nor general economic improvement will lead to higher incomes," he chants in unison with Pat Buchanan. And when Ellen Goodman laments that parents have to spend more and more time "doing battle with our own culture," her sisters in woe include Phyllis Schlafly.

That spreading uneasiness might be the beginning of wisdom if it moved policymakers away from their customary preoccupation with the short term and the quick fix. But if, by some miracle, that were to occur, they would need to raise politics above its current level. For the fact is that no one has much of an idea of how to reinvigorate civil society or to jumpstart self-government. It is one thing to understand that it takes a village to raise a child, but quite another to know what it takes to raise and maintain the village-like institutions that sustain families and the larger polity alike. It is one thing to say that the era of big government is over, but another—as Eastern Europeans have found—to call into being a vibrant democracy. Thus far, the populist energy in current politics seems aimed more at the replacement of current policies and programs at the national level than at the task of rebuilding self-government from the grass-roots up. And no wonder, for the centralization of power has caused the skills of self-government to atrophy.

An encouraging sign in political theory is the remarkable reawakening of interest (here and in Europe) in the nitty-gritty of federalism; subsidiarity (the principle of leaving social tasks to the smallest social unit that can perform them adequately); and modes of legal ordering other than direct, top-down regulation. Sandel emphasizes the need to encourage the sorts of institutions that aid citizens to deliberate well about the common good, and to consider the "civic consequences of economic arrangements." The hope for self-government, he writes in his conclusion, "lies not in relocating sovereignty, but in dispersing it, exploring the unrealized possibilities in federalism and in the institutions such as schools, workplaces, churches and synagogues, trade unions and social movements."

Politically, the stage is set for creative experiments with ideas like the one advanced by Peter Berger and Richard Neuhaus in the 1970s—that the state can promote the delivery of services such as health, education and child care more economically, efficiently and humanely through the mediating institutions of civil society than through state-run agencies. A beneficial side effect would likely be to boost the vitality of the organizations concerned. Consider the innovative approach to day care authorized by Congress in the child welfare legislation of 1990. That statute, with broad bipartisan support, gives the

The Prostration of Memory

Small in the big chair, I looked up from my comic book,
suddenly aware of being alone. A boy will look
for Papa when the parlour and thin hallway loom
out of sight. Qui-quiet. How are these new rooms
so cavernous? It was Maywood. We lived here.
The mantle clock began ticking loud, and seared.
I could feel the tocking tocking on top of me.
Swallow. Singed by late-night air, the book fell free
from my hand. My stocking feet felt, felt down
for the hardwood floor to be there, be the ground.
Skinny as the spindled, eleven numbers of my age,
I slipped off my father's chair, over the coloured pages
fallen to the floor, edging my back on the dark hall-
way's wall to seek the ravel of gold light shawled
around my father's bedroom threshold, the door half-
open, more closed. I could glimpse the horizontal calves
of his legs. I peeked in and saw him fully there—
on his knees at the foot of the bed, in prayer.
The icon above. His ashen mane bowed to his large hands.
I remember being struck still. Dark and light in bands.
I couldn't move. The wide terror. I was terrified.
My father, mortal. I, mortal. What would never hide
again. Embarrassed, I felt the tongue in my mouth.
I crept back to a different chair, a different house,
a changed hero flying over cities in the comic book art.
Whatever grew small or immense in my heart,
I first saw something larger than the world of us
on a humbled, Sunday night, in sudden fear and trust,
surprising my father on his knees in murmured prayer,
his cupped palms cradling the silver of his full hair.

Nicholas Samaras

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states discretion to issue vouchers that permit working parents to choose their own day-care providers, expressly including centers run by religious groups that take religious affiliation into consideration in their hiring practices. Low-income housing is another area where non-governmental organizations (especially trade unions and black churches) have already demonstrated their potential.

But in moving from theory to practice, born-again republicans quickly stop twittering in concert like birds on a New Hampshire morning. One contingent regularly celebrates family, neighborhood and religion (never mentioning workers' associations), while others praise family, neighborhood and unions (with nary a word for churches). For some, "community" primarily means the nation; for others, the states; for still others, the town, tribe or coven. An especially hard nut for chastened liberals to crack is the likelihood that liberal regimes in order to survive may need to refrain from imposing their own image on all the institutions of civil society.

Anticipating what is likely to be an important objection to his thesis, Sandel acknowledges that communities can be narrow-minded and exclusive. "Republican politics," he concedes, "is risky politics." But he argues that a politics that brackets morality is at least as risky, for it has caused "the yearning for a public life of larger meaning [to find] undesirable expression.... Fundamentalists step in where liberals fear to tread." His principal response to champions of full-bore liberalism is that the procedural republic "cannot secure the liberty it promises, because it cannot inspire the moral and civic engagement self-government requires." Elsewhere Sandel has written that "intolerance flourishes where forms of life are dislocated, roots unsettled, traditions undone."

Sandel recognizes that the obstacles to his lofty republican vision are many and formidable. Its prospects will depend to a great extent on the fragile seedbeds of civic virtue, and thus on culture. Still, he is right to emphasize the role of law and the Constitution, because no other country's culture is so permeated by legal ideas, and because juridical frameworks powerfully influence the relationships among government, markets and the structures of civil society. If those frameworks are restructured (or reinterpreted) with economic man, unencumbered man or other sociopaths in mind, we should not be surprised to find ourselves increasingly surrounded by such creatures. Nor should we be surprised to see our society becoming less hospitable to the weak, the vulnerable and dependent.

It is to be regretted that Sandel does not press his case for formative politics further into the realms of practical political science. For the country desperately needs a discussion of the nitty-gritty of federalism, of the appropriate, or optimal, relations among state, market and civil society under modern conditions. What does each do best? How can the harmful tendencies of each be checked without stifling their beneficial functions? What level of decision-making is best? What about indirect effects, long-term consequences and sensitive dependence on initial conditions? It is time, in short, for a more ecological approach to the relations among law, economy and the structures of civil society. Addressing such issues in depth would help Sandel to make clear that his brand of soulcraft is not about soul-engineering, but about protecting social environments that are conducive to the development of the habits and the virtues upon which all liberal welfare states finally depend.

But the key to the fate of the republic is not in the seedbeds but in the seeds, the men and women in whose minds and hearts the tensions between individual rights and the common good are first felt and resolved. In this connection, Sandel's best-known contribution to the criticism of contemporary liberalism has been his attack on its implicit vision of the person: "By insisting that we are bound only by ends and roles we choose for ourselves, it denies that we can ever be claimed by ends we have not chosen—ends given by nature or God, for example, or by our identities as members of families, peoples, cultures, or traditions." But overemphasis on "encumbered selves" carries risks for republicanism. After all, encumbrances (the baggage we all inherit and acquire) may or may not be conducive to human flourishing. As for choice, it is unavoidable. The hope (and the danger) for the democratic experiment lies in the way in which we continuously constitute ourselves, for better or worse, individually and collectively, through large and small decisions.

More than any other form of government, a democratic republic depends on the capacity of men and women to reflect upon their existence, to make judgments concerning the good life, to devise norms and to abide by those norms most of the time. Those decisions, of course, can be powerfully influenced (and not only for the better) by cultural conditioning and social environments. But those encumbrances and settings in turn can be affected to some degree by "reflection and choice." Indeed, the success of the recent critiques of liberalism is a tribute to that ongoing process of experiencing, understanding and judging.

Thanks to Sandel and others, the "search for a new public philosophy" seems less urgent now than the search for a new political practice. Meanwhile the eyes of the real enemies of liberalism are upon the United States. They are betting that it is too late for liberalism's friendly critics to halt the relentless march of historical processes. Let us hope that they have underestimated our system's openness to self-correction through reflection, deliberation and, yes, choice.

MARY ANN GLENDON is the author most recently of *A Nation Under Lawyers: How the Crisis in the Legal Profession is Transforming American Society* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

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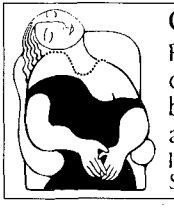

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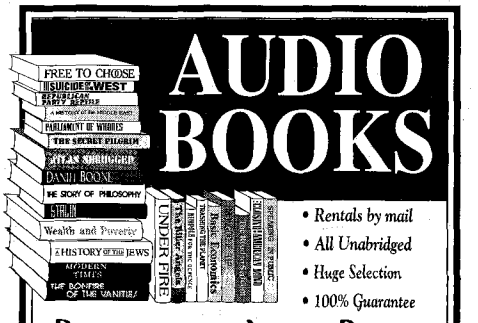

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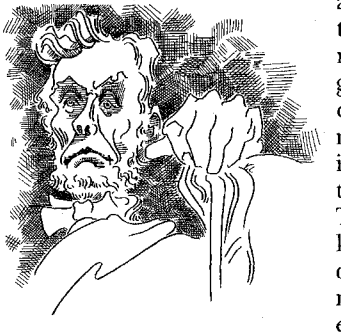
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Violence

WHEN I SEE THE GRUFF FACE OF Gerry Adams, I often think of my grandmother. She had all the stereotypical Irish traits. The seventh of thirteen children, she was born and grew up in Tralee, County Kerry, in the Republic. Her father was fond of booze; her mother was, family legend has it, a saint. Like me, she emigrated at the age of 21, but she traveled east, to London, where she earned money as a cleaning lady for Catholic priests. Her life was not particularly easy: my mother remembers how she used to pick cigarette butt-ends off the street, extract the remaining tobacco and roll new cigarettes for my grandfather. My grandfather, a veteran of the British army in India, was on disability for much of his adult life because of a strange war-wound. Since he was too old for service in the Second World War, he'd volunteered to be a prison warden, to release other men for active duty. Prison workers and inmates were some of the few who couldn't take shelter during bombing raids, so the raids were particularly terrifying affairs. In one of them, a prisoner making uniforms went berserk and stabbed my grandfather in the head with a pair of scissors. Although my grandfather recovered, he was an epileptic from then on. So my grandmother brought up four children during the war, largely on her own, on a pittance.

SHE HAD, THEN, PLENTY OF REASON to be bitter or harbor grudges. But she managed to retain a kind of innocent wonder at the world around her, and a simple trust in God, that somehow smothered the bitter reflex. Sometimes, her simplicity was embarrassing, especially if you were a kid. At Mass, she would recite the Hail Mary at twice the speed and three times the volume of anyone else around—and in an accent that had remained fixed from childhood. Our English churchgoing friends smirked; my siblings and I winced. But there was in her demeanor—as she lit a candle after Mass, or closed her eyes when receiving communion—something we couldn't easily dismiss.

SHE CAME TO LIVE WITH MY FAMILY after my grandfather died; and her habits never changed. She referred so often and so matter-of-factly to Our Lady that I almost came to think of the Blessed Virgin as a distant, benign relative, who might at some point come to stay. Mary wasn't the only spectral force, either. I remember my grandmother telling my sister and me one night about the screams that could still be heard on dark nights in her hometown, screams that came from the ghostly victims of ancient British atrocities. And yet the collective memory of such oppression never seemed to impinge on her naïveté. Watching the evening news, she would routinely gasp loudly at any untoward event and tut-tut at any politician of whom she disapproved. She remained ferociously patriotic about her adopted country. A Tory to the core, she instilled in me an early, almost religious suspicion of the Labour Party. "You know what they sing at the end of their party conference?" she would ask me breathlessly. "They sing the *Red Flag*!" At the age of 8 or 9, I had no idea what the Red Flag was, or how on earth one could sing it, but I was disturbed nonetheless.



YES, MY GRANDMOTHER MAY HAVE succumbed to the over-assimilation of most first-generation immigrants. But she never pretended to be completely British. Her ethnicity and religion were never apologized for; and they were effortlessly expressed. When she became ill in later years with Alzheimer's, she went to stay in a convent; there, even when she could no longer recognize her family, and was unnerved by almost everything, she found an ease in the sight of nuns in habits, in the rituals of the Mass and bric-a-brac of the Catholic faith. They were her home. Nor did she ever forget the brutality of British rule in Ireland. The very words "Black and Tans," referring to the most feared of the British colonial troops, became synonymous in my head with menace.

AND YET HER VIEW OF THE IRA WAS simple: it was evil. It was evil for some simple reasons: it murdered innocents and terrorized countless others. Removed from the social pressures of Ireland, she didn't hesitate to say so. From that early indoctrination, I never really questioned my grandmother's assessment. To be sure, I complicated it. I learned that the IRA murdered because it could not win its ultimate objectives by democratic processes. I learned that its allies—from Libya to the old Soviet Union—shared this hostility to democracy. So, although I grew up as an Irish-Catholic Englishman in a thoroughly Protestant Britain, it never occurred to me that the provisional IRA had any genuine claim to my loyalty. Sure, some of the Ulster Protestants struck me as the worst kind of bigots, almost deserving of the enmity they inspired. But the tenacity of their nationalism and the depth of their religious passion also struck me as worthy of some legitimate political expression. Until the northerners mellowed or changed their minds, partition seemed as sane a solution to the Irish problem as would conceivably be found. That's a view I came to hold in my teens; and it's the view I hold now.

MOST PEOPLE IN IRELAND, NORTH and south, agree with this. Sinn Fein, the IRA's mouthpiece and apologists for a forcible reunification of the island, garners 2 percent of the vote in the Republic and a fraction more in the North. That's why the IRA has to kill people: it needs murderous blackmail to gain a modicum of political leverage. No one should doubt this ultimate point: the IRA has been in "peace" negotiations for the last couple of years solely because its henchmen thought their blackmail was finally going to win. They thought they could find a way to secure a British abandonment of Ulster without further fighting. Surrender, in other words. They were wrong, it turns out. So their return to violence was inevitable from the beginning and will likely continue through our lifetimes. After all, the alternatives for the IRA are grim. Real democracy would finish it off. Disarmament (the only criterion the Brits insisted upon for negotiations) would finish it off. Peace would finish it off. Why would anyone vote for their own extinction?

TO MANY AMERICANS, THIS MAY seem an unduly harsh assessment. I doubt it seems that way to many Israelis, who also have to deal with anti-democratic murderers in the context of a "peace process." But it's absurd that it should seem harsh to so many Irish-Americans. Their support for the IRA means that war and murder will continue to plague their beloved Ireland; their loyalty is violence disguised as romance. The "peace process" in Ireland, alas, is a chimera: a means to a further war or a temporary distraction from a reality that will return. My grandmother, barely literate and scarred by the Troubles from childhood, could see this. Why can't Irish-Americans?

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Dangerous Nonsense

For a number of years, a mini-curriculum called the "African-American Baseline Essays" has been circulating all over the U.S. Many urban school districts, including Atlanta, the District of Columbia, and Detroit, have adopted the essays, which focus on ancient African civilizations, especially ancient Egypt. The motives of school districts that put the curriculum into their classrooms were good. They wanted to encourage African-American students to raise their sights by having them learn about the accomplishments of African civilizations. But the baseline essays, which include a lot of pseudo-history and pseudo-science, are a terrible way of achieving this. The science baseline essay, in particular, is full of quackery masquerading as science.

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Why didn't scientists rise up to expose the science baseline essay? I don't know. With a few exceptions, they have been silent. But now, an article in *Education Week* (February 21, 1995) says the scientific community is making a serious effort to reveal the essay for the dangerous nonsense that it is. A group of scientists, who are mainly African-American, are holding a series of meetings funded by the National Science Foundation to discuss its errors in fact and approach, and they will also be writing a book on the subject. According to *Education Week,* one of the scientists compares teaching this kind of pseudo-science to giving heroin to patients who have tumors: "It makes them feel better, but it doesn't solve the problem."

What exactly is wrong with the science baseline essay? The excellence of ancient Egyptian mathematicians, physicians, and astronomers is widely acknowledged, but the baseline essay is not content with their real and considerable achievements. Students who learn science from the baseline essay will be told that the Egyptians developed the theory of evolution (thousands of years before Darwin), understood quantum mechanics, and flew around for business and pleasure in full-size gliders. These absurd claims, which no serious scientist accepts, are reminiscent of the kind of thing we used to laugh at the Soviets for saying: Everything of any importance, including baseball, was invented in the U.S.S.R.

But the science baseline essay does not merely exaggerate the achievements of Egyptian science. It presents, as science, stuff that is no more scientific than the horoscopes in the daily newspaper or Mme. Rosa, the fortuneteller. Students whose teachers use this curriculum will learn that the Egyptians could predict lucky and unlucky days with the help of "astrophysical treatises"; and they'll hear how the Egyptians' highly developed "human capabilities" allowed them to see events before they happened ("precognition") or at a distance ("remote viewing"). They will be fed superstition dressed up as science.

Even worse, the baseline essay pushes racist concepts like "melanism," the theory that blacks are genetically superior to other races because they have more melanin in their skin. Joseph L. Graves, an African-American scientist who teaches evolutionary biology at Arizona State University West, points out that this is the same kind of "pseudo-scientific biological determinism" that is used to assert that blacks are less intelligent than whites. According to the *Education Week* story, Graves cited Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray's 1994 book *The Bell Curve,* which explains the IQ gap between blacks and whites in terms of superior white genes. But of course he could also have pointed to Adolph Hitler's racial theories.

The science baseline essay is an example of the kind of curriculum we don't need. It uses pseudo-science to promote a political agenda. At the same time, it cheats students of a chance to find out what real science is like, and it deprives them of a foundation on which to build future learning. This would be bad news for any of our youngsters; it is criminal for poor, minority students. The achievement gap between these students—especially African-Americans—and white, middle-class students has narrowed considerably during the last 20 years, but it continues to be a disgrace and a danger to our nation. We will not close it with curricula like the "science" baseline essay.

The science baseline essay also raises a more general question related to standards. There is now a push to raise the educational standards for U.S. students, but who should set these standards? A large number of people seem willing to give states the say in setting some basic standards about what students should know, as long as certain options are left to local school districts. But shouldn't we consider setting standards for what students *shouldn't* learn as well as for what they should? There is a lot of opposition to the phony science of the Right, as exemplified in creationism, but what about the phony science of the Left that is on view in the baseline essays? Surely students need to be protected from both extremes.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1996 by Albert Shanker.

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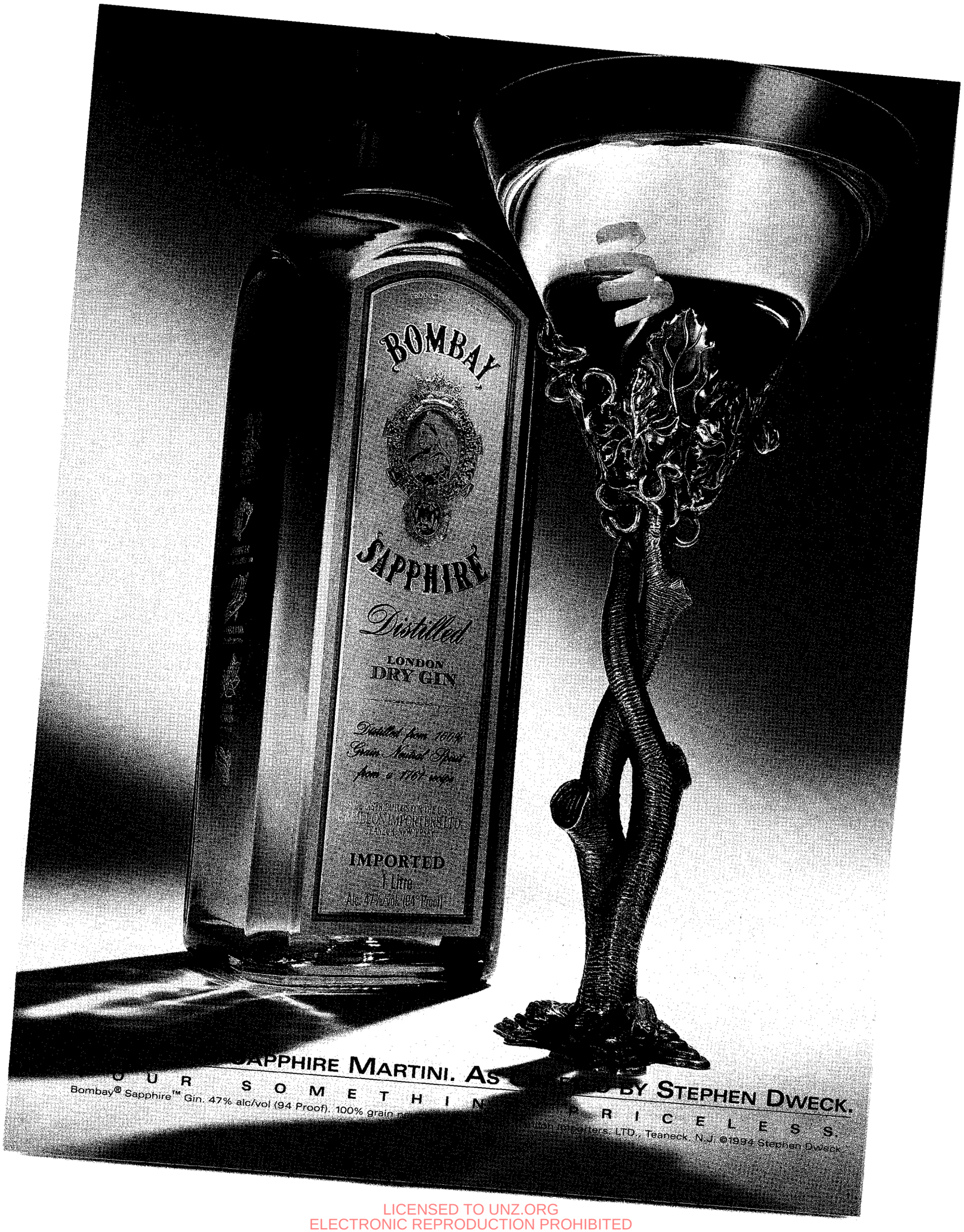

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